Microwaving bananas

Everybody loves bananas — dipped in chocolate, microwaved in sweet sauces, moist puddings or spicy chutneys, they add their distinctive flavour to a host of sweet or savoury dishes.

Bananas are quicker than ever to make into exciting recipes with the microwave, and retain all their rich, fresh flavour. They can be simply and swiftly dressed up with sauces or used in pies, cakes and chutneys.

When buying bananas, select ones that are firm and still slightly green. Firm bananas are best for cooking as they soften without falling apart and are easier to slice. Over-ripe or blackened bananas are excellent for mashing or a moist banana bread. Store bananas in a cool place for up to a week, but not in the refrigerator where their skin will blacken.

Hot banana split

10 mins

Standing time: none

4 firm bananas
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
8 scoops ice cream, to serve

SAUCE
275g / 10oz frozen raspberries
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice

SERVES 4

1 Place raspberries in a bowl and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 6-7 minutes; stir three times.

2 Drain raspberry juice into a bowl; stir cornflour into juice. Add sugar and raspberries. Microwave at 100% (High) 3-5 minutes to thicken; stir once. Add lemon juice; sieve through nylon sieve.

3 Slice bananas lengthways and brush with lemon juice. Join halves together. Microwave on a plate at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes.

4 Place a banana split on each of four plates, open them out and top each with two scoops of ice cream. Pour over sauce.

Hot Banana Split

RAY DUNS

Banana coconut pie

12½ mins

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370)
75g / 3oz caster sugar
45ml / 3tbls cornflour*
pinch of salt
425ml / 15fl oz milk
3 egg yolks, lightly beaten
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
50g / 2oz desiccated coconut
3 ripe bananas
25g / 1oz toasted coconut

SERVES 6

1 Combine sugar, cornflour and salt in a bowl. Stir in milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, stirring twice to thicken.
2 Stir quarter of milk mixture into yolks. Return to mixture in the bowl, stirring constantly. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes until thickened.
3 Mix in the butter and cool slightly. Stir in flavouring and coconut. Cover surface with cling film; let cool at room temperature.
4 Slice bananas and arrange in base of pastry case. Pour in custard; chill thoroughly. Sprinkle with toasted coconut.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
2¼tbls cornflour

Banana Coconut Pie

Spicy baked bananas

6½ mins

Standing time: none

The skins tend to blacken but the flesh remains perfectly moist.

4 bananas
16 cloves
30ml / 2tbls runny honey
15ml / 1tbls light brown sugar
15g / ½oz butter
5ml / 1tsp caster sugar, mixed with pinch of cinnamon

SERVES 4

How to microwave Spicy baked bananas

Cut *four diagonal slits in the skin of each banana, using a sharp knife. Insert a clove into each slit. Place bananas on a microwave tray or dish.*

Cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes; rearrange once. Cut along skin, either side of slits; peel away the section of skin.*

Microwave *honey, sugar and butter at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes; stir once. Replace cloves; spoon over sauce. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar.*

Flambéed bananas

2½ mins

Standing time: none

Choose very firm, slightly underripe bananas for this recipe. Ripe bananas are not successful as they turn pulpy when heated.

50g / 2oz butter
50g / 2oz demerara sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
45ml / 3tbls double cream
4 firm bananas
15ml / 1tbls brandy

SERVES 6

1 Place the butter in a large serving bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Stir in the sugar, ginger and cream. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes until the sugar has melted and sauce is thickened, stirring once.
2 Slice the bananas lengthways, then each length in half crossways. Add the banana to the sauce, tossing to coat, then microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds to warm.
3 Meanwhile, pour the brandy into a ladle and warm over a low flame. Pour over the bananas and ignite (see Cook's notes, right).

Flambéed Bananas

DON LAST

Chocolate bananas

3 mins

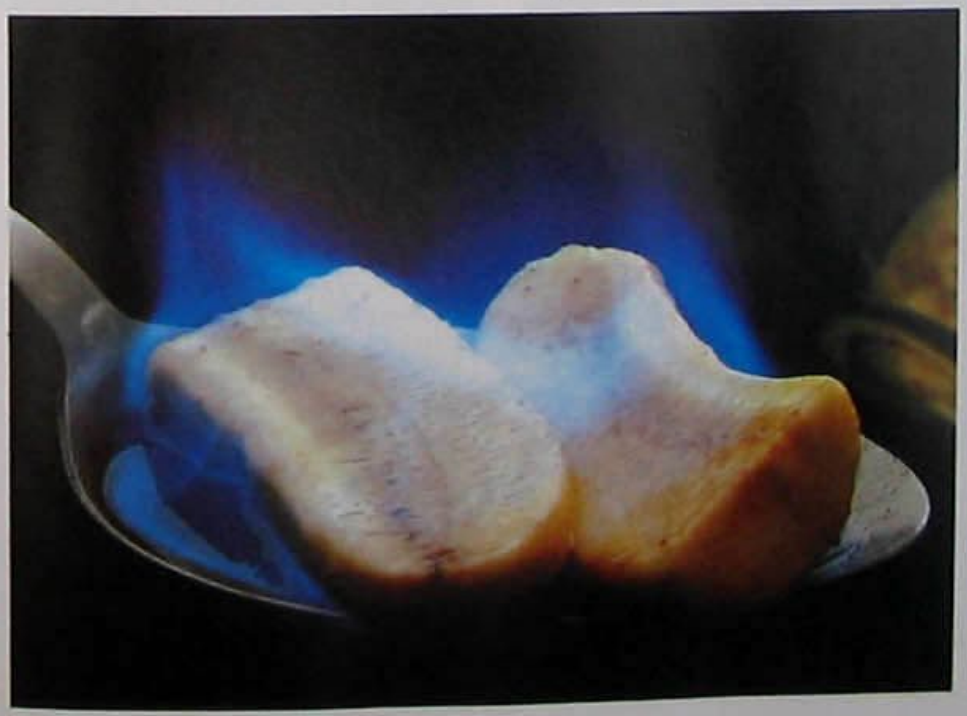
Standing time: none

5 long firm bananas
chocolate vermicelli or hundreds and thousands, to decorate
350g / 12oz chocolate drops
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil

SERVES 10

1 Slice bananas into 2.5cm / 1in lengths. Spread vermicelli or hundreds and thousands on a plate.
2 Make the coating: place chocolate drops and oil in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-3½ minutes, or until most of drops are shiny and soft, stir well.
3 Drop bananas in chocolate. Lift out with a carving fork and shake gently to remove excess chocolate. Insert wooden skewer to remove. Dip in vermicelli or hundreds and thousands. Leave on a plate at least 5-10 minutes to set.

Chocolate Bananas



Cook's notes

Stand well back when igniting the heated brandy. The flame will leap up initially and then die down to a glow. Allow flames to die completely before serving.

Banana pudding bread

13 mins

Standing time: 5-10 mins

Make the most of blackened bananas that are past their best — they make a 'mean' pudding!

75g / 3oz wholewheat flour
75g / 3oz plain flour, sifted
175g / 6oz demerara sugar
75g / 3oz butter or margarine, softened
30ml / 2tbls milk
2 eggs
2 very ripe bananas, sliced
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon or mixed spice

Banana Pudding Bread

TOPPING
50g / 2oz plain flour
50g / 2oz caster sugar
25g / 1oz butter or margarine

MAKES 8-10 SLICES

1 Line the base of a 20 × 10cm / 8 × 4in loaf dish with greased greaseproof paper.
2 For topping, mix together flour and sugar, and rub in fat until resembling fine breadcrumbs.
3 For the pudding, combine all ingredients in a bowl and beat on medium speed of electric mixer for 1 minute. Spread evenly in the dish and sprinkle with topping. Shield dish ends with small pieces of smooth foil, securely attached.
4 Place dish on inverted plate and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 9 minutes, rotating quarter turn twice. Increase power to 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes until cooked (see Cook's notes); remove foil after 2 minutes. Rotate twice.
5 Stand 5-10 minutes before turning out on wire rack. Remove paper and turn up to cool.

VARIATIONS
Try some alternative toppings: crumble ginger biscuits over the top or cinnamon sugar, or sprinkle with cake crumbs or chopped nuts.

Cook's notes

If using a glass loaf dish, check whether the cake is cooked by looking underneath. No raw mix should be visible in centre of base. Otherwise, insert a wooden skewer into middle of loaf — it should come out clean. The top should also spring back when lightly pressed.

Banana and coconut chutney

30 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Coconut gives a deliciously nutty flavour and texture to this rather delicate chutney. Serve with lamb, chicken and curry dishes, to give a touch of the exotic to your cooking.

1 onion, finely chopped
700ml / 1¼pt malt vinegar
8-10 bananas, weighing 1.1-1.4 / 2½-3lb
2 garlic cloves, crushed
250g / 9oz dark soft brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon

5ml / 1tsp mustard powder
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
50g / 2oz desiccated coconut

MAKES ABOUT 1.8kg / 4lb

1 Place the onion in a 4L / 7pt bowl with 150ml / ¼pt of the vinegar. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Meanwhile peel and slice the bananas. Stir in the remaining ingredients and microwave at 100% (High) for 25-30 minutes, stirring often, until thick and pulpy. Let stand for 10 minutes.
3 Put into warmed sterilized jars, filling to within 12mm / ½in of the tops. Cover with vinegar-proof covers and a lid. Store in a cool, dark place for at least 6 weeks before serving. Use within 12 months.

Banana cooler

4 mins

Standing time: none

For a really refreshing and slightly unusual idea, try these flavoured ice cubes in any sparkling drink.

175g / 6oz sugar
225ml / 8fl oz water
1 banana, mashed
175ml / 6fl oz unsweetened orange juice
45ml / 3tbls unsweetened pineapple juice
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
ginger ale, lemonade, or sparkling mineral water, chilled, to serve

MAKES 32 CUBES

1 Combine the sugar and water in a 850ml / 1½pt jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, or until boiling. Continue to microwave for a further 1 minute at 100% (High).
2 Blend in the remaining ingredients and leave to cool. Pour into two 16-cube ice trays and freeze for at least four hours.
3 To serve: place three or four cubes in a glass, and pour over ginger ale, lemonade or sparkling mineral water.

Banana Cooler

Sumptuous sole

Sole, with its delicate taste and texture, cooks to perfection in the microwave. Served stuffed, sauced or simply sprinkled with herbs, this superb fish makes delectable eating in a matter of minutes.

Microwaving means that it is possible to cook sole to perfection since, like all flat fish, it cooks quickly and is at its best when 'just' cooked.

Although both have a uniquely delicate flavour, Dover and lemon sole belong to different species. The more expensive Dover sole is the 'true' one, having a finer texture and rougher, darker skin. Lemon sole is a member of the plaice family and has a similar texture to plaice.

When microwaving the whole fish or sole fillets, arrange them in a dish, head to tail, tucking any very thin edges under the thicker parts of adjacent fish. Microwave for the minimum recommended time, then check to see if the fish is cooked. The flesh should be moist, white and flake easily. If it is still transparent and spongy, microwave for a little longer.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use flounder for sole or plaice.

Dover Sole with Herbs

IRON LASI

Dover sole with herbs

3½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Ask your fishmonger to remove head and skin the sole for you.

2 × 350g / 12oz whole Dover sole, head removed and skinned
15g / ½oz butter
salt and pepper
lemon slices and fresh herbs, to garnish

SERVES 2

1 Spread the fish on both sides with the butter and season well.
2 Arrange the fish, head to tail, in a large shallow dish and cover with cling film.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4½ minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every minute. Check that fish is cooked by pressing through the cling film. The fish should feel soft.
4 Stand for 5 minutes; garnish with slices of lemon and herbs. Serve with new potatoes.

Slimmer's notes

Delicious sole is the perfect slimmer's fare. Dover Sole with Herbs will suit the most calorie-conscious at a very reasonable 270Cal / 1135kJ per serving.

DON LAST

Braised sole

9 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 carrot, sliced
1 celery stalk, sliced
1 small onion, thinly sliced
grated zest of ½ lemon
4 lemon slices
1 bay leaf
5ml / 1tsp chopped fresh parsley
salt and pepper
50ml / 2fl oz water
600g / 1¼lb Dover or lemon sole fillets, skinned
parsley, to garnish

SERVES 4

Braised Sole

How to microwave Braised sole

Combine *all the ingredients except the fish in a large, shallow dish. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes.*

Arrange *the fish in the dish, with the thickest portions to the outside. Overlap thin areas in the centre of the dish, if necessary. Cover again with vented cling film.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 5-7½ minutes, or until fish flakes easily. Rearrange fish and rotate dish a half turn halfway through cooking. Stand for 5 minutes. Garnish and serve.*

Crispy sole

6¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

100g / 4oz crisp snack crackers, crushed
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
4 Dover or lemon sole* fillets, skinned (about 100-175g / 4-6oz each)
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
lemon wedges, to garnish

SAUCE
15g / ½oz butter
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt milk
5ml / 1tsp mustard powder
5ml / 1tsp water
5ml / 1tsp malt vinegar
salt and pepper
45-60ml / 3-4tbls single cream

SERVES 4

1 Mix the crushed crackers and parsley. Brush fillets with lemon juice and then coat on both sides with the cracker mixture.
2 Place on a roasting rack set in a shallow dish with the thickest portions to the outside. Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until the fish flakes easily, turning dish once. Stand for 5 minutes.
3 Place the butter in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-15 seconds until melted. Add the flour and gradually whisk in the milk until smooth. Microwave for 1½-2 minutes, stirring once or twice, until thick and smooth.
4 Blend the mustard powder with water, vinegar and seasoning. Whisk into the sauce with the cream. Garnish and serve.

Left: *Crispy Sole*
Below: *Saucy Stuffed Sole*

Cook's notes

To crisp the cracker coating, place the cooked sole fillets under a hot grill for 2-3 minutes until golden brown, turning carefully once. Garnish with lemon and serve.

Microtips

Remember that fish continues to cook while standing. If after microwaving, fish seems 'almost' done, stand for recommended time. If still transparent and spongy, cook for another 30-60 seconds and check again.

Saucy stuffed sole

6 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 Dover or lemon sole* fillets, about 100-175g / 4-6oz each, skinned
25g / 1oz butter

STUFFING
15g / ½oz fresh breadcrumbs
2 spring onions, finely chopped
175g / 6oz can crabmeat, flaked
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
1 egg, lightly beaten
pinch of cayenne pepper
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley

SAUCE
125ml / 4fl oz soured cream
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
pinch of salt

SERVES 4

1 Mix stuffing ingredients thoroughly. Lay the fillets, skinned side up, on board and spread stuffing over fish. Roll up and secure with cocktail sticks. Arrange rolls in a circle, join side down, in a shallow, buttered dish.
2 Melt the butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds and brush over the fillets. Cover loosely with greaseproof paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7½ minutes, turning once.
3 Stand for 5 minutes. Combine sauce ingredients in a small bowl and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 45-50 seconds.

Spinach stuffed sole

10¼ mins

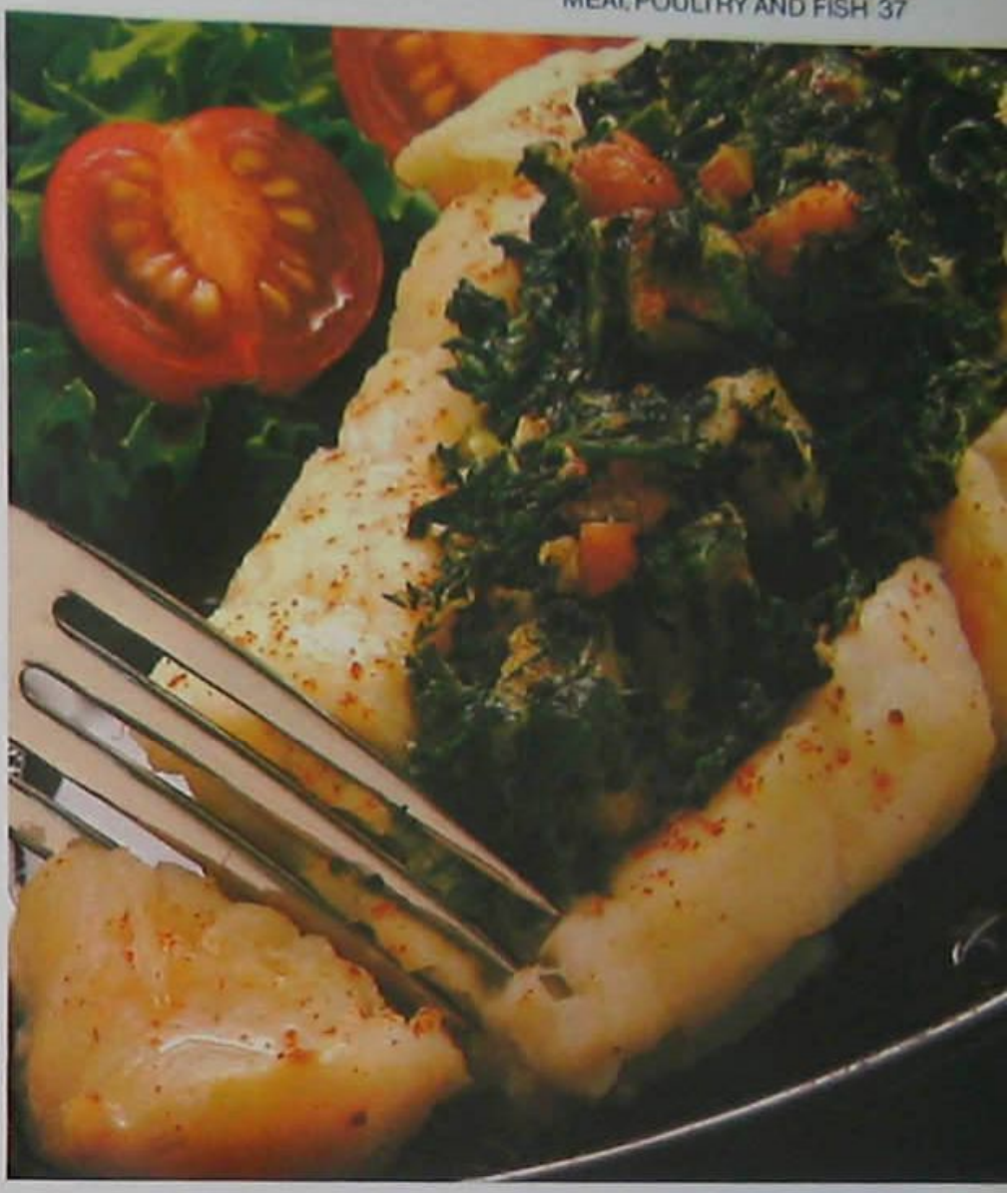
Standing time: 5 mins

2 × 225g / 8oz lemon sole* fillets, skinned
ground paprika, for sprinkling

STUFFING
175g / 6oz cream cheese
225g / 8oz packet frozen chopped spinach, thawed
60ml / 4tbls fresh breadcrumbs
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped pecan nuts or walnuts
10ml / 2tsp milk
10ml / 2tsp mayonnaise
pinch of salt

SERVES 4

1 Cut each fillet into four even pieces. Cut long slits in four of the pieces for the stuffing. Place the cut pieces on top of the uncut fish and place in a large, buttered dish.
2 Place cream cheese in a bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 25-30 seconds until soft. Stir in remaining stuffing ingredients.
3 Open the slits on the cut fish to form pockets and stuff with the cream cheese and spinach mixture. Sprinkle with a little paprika and cover with buttered greaseproof paper.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-11 minutes or until fish flakes, turning dish twice during cooking. Stand for 5 minutes. Serve with new or creamed potatoes.



Spinach Stuffed Sole

Microtips

Although microwaving prevents fishy smells in the kitchen, you may wish to 'freshen' the inside of your cooker after cooking fish. Place a slice of lemon in a large jug of hot water and boil in microwave for 3 minutes. Wipe the cooker walls with a clean cloth.

Cook's notes

In all these recipes, Dover and lemon sole are interchangeable. Plaice can also be used as a less expensive but still very tasty alternative.

Adapting a recipe: soups

Making soups in the microwave makes sense when it comes to cutting down on time and trouble, and adapting conventional recipes is easy — using frozen or canned ingredients is time-saving too.

Tasty and nutritious, soups are a favourite all year round — although they are especially good on a chilly winter's day! If soup is popular with your family, adapt your favourite recipes to make in the microwave.

All-in-one combinations of liquid, meat and vegetables can be microwaved without preliminary softening of the vegetables. However, you should reduce the conventional liquid content because the consistent microwave cooking process means there will be less evaporation than would happen with conventional cooking. The exception is when soaking pulses — use the conventional quantity of water.

When making richer soups, that include cream and eggs, the microwave will again make your life easier. Simply whisk the soup every 30 seconds and it is unlikely to separate — and of course, there won't be any sticky pans to clean!

Below right: *Celery and Potato Soup*
Below left: *Creamy Vegetable Soup*

Celery and potato soup

20 mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

450g / 1lb potatoes, diced
3 large celery stalks, sliced
1 onion, chopped
90ml / 6tbls water
½ vegetable stock cube
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
275ml / ½pt water
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
black pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the potatoes, celery, onion and water in a bowl and crumble over the stock cube. Cover the bowl with a lid or cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender, stirring twice.
2 Blend the flour with a little of the milk, then pour over the vegetables with the remaining milk and water. Stir in the butter until melted then add the parsley and a generous grinding of black pepper.
3 Microwave, uncovered, for 10-12 minutes, stirring several times, or until the soup is thick, piping hot and the vegetables really tender. Stand for 3-4 minutes.

Creamy vegetable soup

18½ mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz unsmoked, lean bacon rashers
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, thinly sliced
2 celery stalks, sliced
575ml / 1pt hot water
1 chicken stock cube
1 bay leaf
539g / 1lb 3oz can green peas, drained
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
10ml / 2tsp plain flour
60ml / 4tbls single cream or evaporated milk
2.5ml / ½tsp lemon juice
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the bacon rashers between double layers of absorbent paper, and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, turning twice. Place on more paper to drain, then chop.
2 Put the onion, carrot, celery, hot water, stock cube and bay leaf into a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-11 minutes until the vegetables are tender.
3 Purée the peas in a blender or food processor, then stir into the vegetables with the thyme. Microwave at 100% (High), uncovered, for 3-4 minutes.
4 Blend the flour with the cream or milk and whisk into the soup. Stir in the bacon, lemon juice and seasoning. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until thick. Remove the bay leaf and serve.

Cook's notes

For extra-good flavour use home-made stock for microwaved soups.

Put fresh or cooked bones in a deep casserole, cover with water and add fresh or dried herbs.

Cover and bring to a good boil at 100% (High); reduce to 50% (Medium) and microwave for up to 30 minutes, until the stock is well concentrated. Strain before use.

Chunky beef and vegetable soup

CONVENTIONAL RECIPE

15g/½oz butter
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 celery stalk, sliced
2 carrots, thinly sliced lengthways
1 potato, cut into 12mm/½in cubes
1 beef stock cube, crumbled
850ml/1½pt water
227g/8oz can tomato sauce or chopped tomatoes
25g/1oz plain flour
225g/8oz cooked beef, cubed
2.5ml/½tsp dried basil
100g/4oz frozen peas
salt and pepper
SERVES 4-5

omit

Reduce to 425ml 3/4 pt

1 Melt the butter over a medium heat in a large, heavy-based saucepan. Sauté the onion and celery for 5 minutes, until tender.

Omit

2 Add the carrots, potato and crumbled stock cube, then stir in the water.

3 Bring to the boil, then simmer gently for 15-20 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.

Microwave at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes

4 Place the tomato sauce or chopped tomatoes in a bowl and whisk in the flour. Stir into the vegetable mixture with the cooked beef, basil, peas and salt and pepper to taste.

5 Simmer very gently for another 12-15 minutes, or until thickened and the meat is well heated through.

Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes

Chunky beef 'n' vegetable soup

16 mins

Standing time: none

2 carrots, thinly sliced
1 potato, in 12mm / ½in cubes
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 celery stalk, sliced
425ml / ¾pt hot water
1 beef stock cube, crumbled
227g / 8oz can chopped tomatoes
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
225g / 8oz cooked beef, cubed
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
100g / 4oz frozen peas
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-5

1 Put the vegetables, water and stock cube into a large dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes, stirring once, until tender.

2 Place the chopped tomatoes in a bowl and whisk in the flour. Stir into the vegetable mixture with beef, basil and peas.

3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, stirring twice, until thick and hot. Season to taste.

Rich clam chowder

22 mins

Standing time: none

6 smoked bacon rashers, rinds removed and chopped
4 potatoes, peeled and diced
1 large onion, chopped
290g / 10oz can baby clams, drained and chopped, liquid reserved
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
500ml / 18fl oz milk
150ml / ¼pt single cream
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

How to microwave Rich clam chowder

Microwave *the bacon in a large, covered casserole at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Drain off fat. Add potatoes, onions and reserved clam liquid.*

Cover *the casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender. Stir the mixture twice.*

Blend *the flour smoothly with 60ml / 4tbls of the milk. Stir briskly into the potato mixture. Pour in the remaining milk and stir well to mix.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes to thicken, stirring two or three times. Stir in clams and cream; heat for 2-4 minutes. Season.*

Split pea soup

70 mins

Standing time: none

Soaking dried peas is still a long job in the microwave — but your energy costs will be reduced!

1.1L / 2pt hot water
225g / 8oz dried split green peas
1 onion, chopped
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
1 small bay leaf
1 celery stalk, sliced
1 large carrot, thinly sliced
100-175g / 4-6oz cooked ham, cubed
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Put the hot water, peas, onion, basil and bay leaf into a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 35-40 minutes, stirring two or three times, or until the peas are almost tender.
2 Add the celery, carrot, ham and seasoning, to taste. Microwave uncovered at 100% (High) for 35-40 minutes until the vegetables are tender and the peas are soft and mushy. Stir several times, and add extra seasoning to taste.

VARIATIONS
For a smooth texture, cool the cooked soup slightly, then purée. Microwave for 2-3 minutes at 100% (High) until really hot. Stir in a little cream to serve.

Easy asparagus soup

13½ mins

Standing time: none

½ small onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
275g / 10oz frozen asparagus
37.5ml / 2½tbls flour
pinch grated nutmeg
salt and pepper
½-1 vegetable stock cube
575ml / 1pt milk
100g / 4oz rice, cooked and drained
1.5ml / ¼tsp paprika

SERVES 4

Above: *Easy Asparagus Soup*
Below: *Split Pea Soup*

1 Combine the onion, celery and asparagus in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6½-7½ minutes, until the vegetables are tender, stirring twice.
2 Purée the asparagus mixture in a blender. Return the purée to a clean casserole and stir in the flour, nutmeg, seasoning, stock cube and milk.
3 Add the rice, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, or until the soup is thickened and hot. Sprinkle with paprika to serve.

Cheesy onion soup

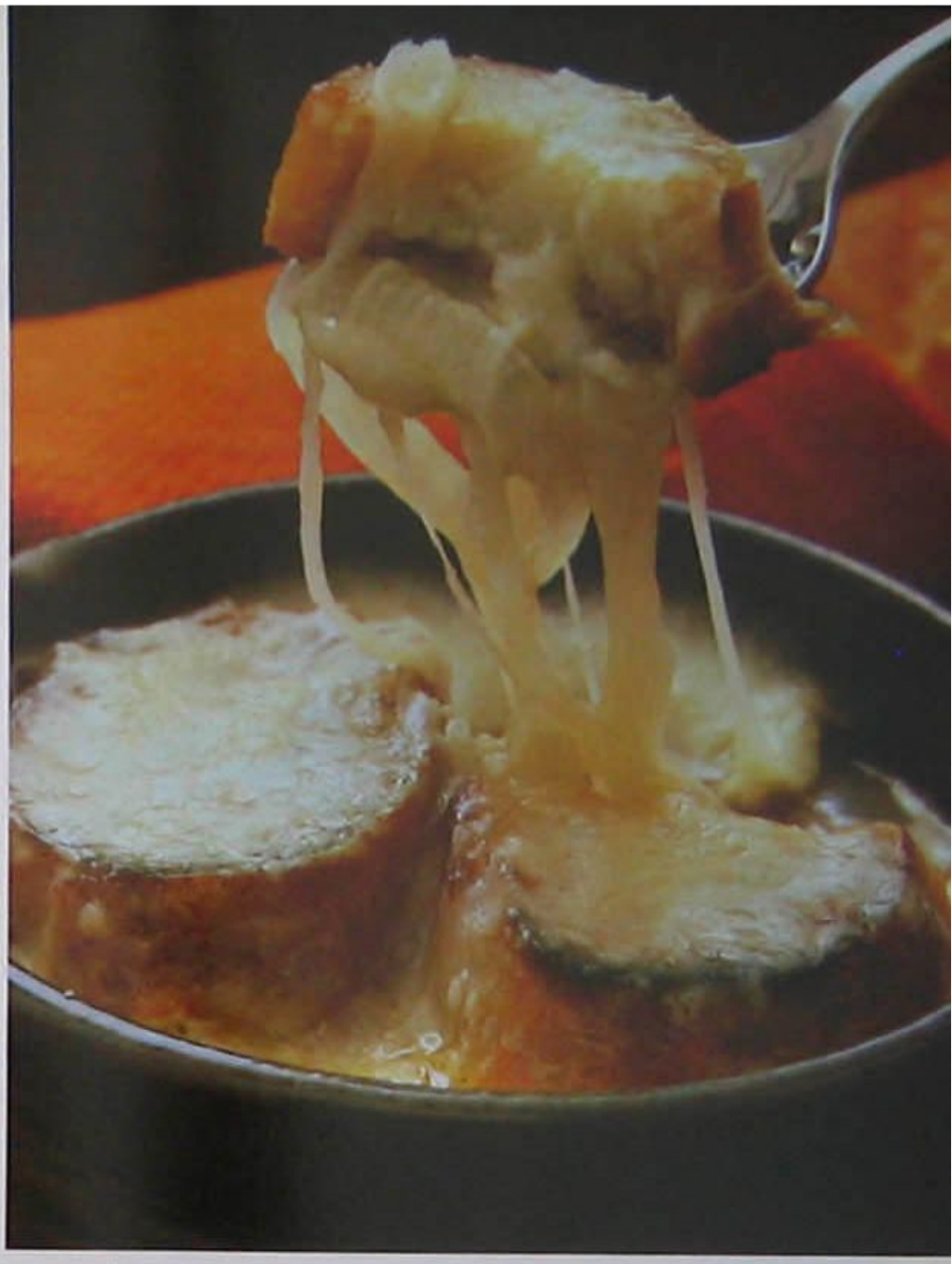
17 mins

Standing time: none

Traditionally onion soup acquires a caramel brown colour when the onions are browned conventionally in the butter. The beef consommé adds colour to this microwaved soup, but add gravy browning for an extra rich result if wished.

450g / 1lb onions, very thinly sliced
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
2 × 227g / 10.4oz cans beef consommé
hot water, to add
6 slices French bread, toasted
225g / 8oz Gruyère cheese, grated
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4



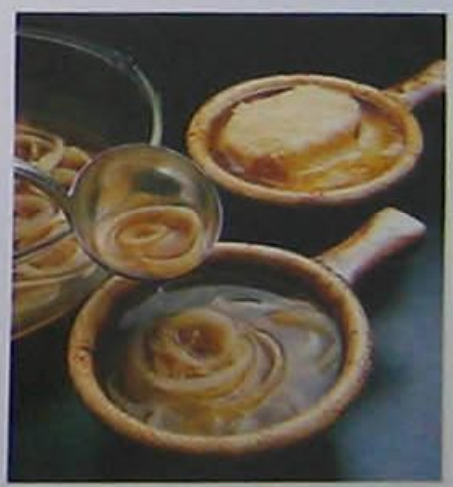
Cook's notes

Wholemeal or granary bread spread with yeast extract or French mustard can be used without toasting. For a special occasion stir 45ml / 3tbls coarsely chopped walnuts into the soup just before topping with the bread and cheese.

How to microwave Cheesy onion soup

Put *onions and butter into a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until onions are soft and translucent.*

Measure *consommé and make up to 1.1L / 2pt with hot water. Stir into the onions. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until hot.*



Ladle *soup into bowls. Top with bread and cheeses. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until cheese melts; rotate three times.*

Rich lemon cheesecake

This melting, creamy cheesecake with its rich, sweet, fruity topping and crumbly crisp base is bound to prove a temptation too great to resist.

If cheesecakes didn't already exist, they would have had to be invented with the advent of the microwave — cheesecakes are perfect for quick, easy microwave cooking.

For special-occasion teas, or dinner party desserts, it is hard to beat a cheesecake, and with the help of your microwave you can produce delicious, professional-looking results in a matter of minutes.

This rich, creamy cheesecake stays moist and it cooks without forming a skin or a crust, nor drying or cracking. It is important not to overheat the filling (as with any rich custard mixture) so the cake should be microwaved at medium power and turned frequently for even cooking. Make this rich cheesecake the day before and chill overnight for best results.

If preferred, the cheesecake could be cooked in a 20 × 15cm / 10 × 6in rectangular dish. Shield the corners with small, smooth pieces of foil for the first half of the cooking time to ensure even

cooking and perfect results.

Anything this delicious will be eaten almost as quickly as it is cooked — so make sure you save some for the cook!

Microtips

If the strawberry conserve is too thick to mix, microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-40 seconds to soften, then stir in the lemon juice. (Take care not to heat the jam for too long. Microwaves are very strongly attracted to sugary mixtures and this could spoil the glaze.)

Rich lemon cheesecake

14¼ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

50g / 2oz butter
100g / 4oz digestive, or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
450g / 1lb curd or full-fat soft cheese
100g / 4oz caster sugar
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
45ml / 3tbls lemon juice
3 eggs
60ml / 4tbls strawberry conserve
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice

SERVES 8

VARIATIONS

Ring the changes by using blackcurrant or apricot conserve instead of strawberry, and mix with orange juice instead of lemon.

Cook's notes

Turn the cheesecake out before glazing. First run a knife around the edges to loosen them, then cover with greaseproof paper and turn on to a plate. Remove the dish, peel off the lining paper and turn back on to a serving dish. Peel off the top paper and spread the strawberry glaze over the surface.

How to microwave Rich lemon cheesecake

Place *the butter in a 23cm / 9in round dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, or until hot and melted. Pour into a bowl containing the biscuits and stir together well to make a crumbly mixture.*

Cut *a double layer of greaseproof paper to fit the base of the dish. Place in the dish, using the butter left in it to stick it neatly to the edges and base. Press the crumb mixture evenly over the base.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, then set aside. Place the cheese in a bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute, until soft. Add the sugar, lemon zest and juice, and eggs and beat until smooth.*

Microwave *the cheese filling at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, until thick, whisking every 2 minutes. Whisk well at the end of the cooking time, until thick and smooth, then pour into the crumb-based dish.*

Spread *evenly, then microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7-10 minutes, or until just set in the centre, giving a quarter turn every 3 minutes. Remove from the cooker and allow to stand for 10 minutes to complete cooking.*

Cool *the cheesecake completely, then chill overnight. Turn out on to a serving dish, see Cook's notes above. Combine the conserve and lemon juice and spread over the top of the cheesecake.*

Deli sausages

Break away from bangers and mash! Try these unusual and delicious recipes, which make the most of the exciting continental sausages on supermarket delicatessen counters. They're sure to please.

Once upon a time a 'sausage' was simply the humble pork banger. However, things have changed. The most basic of supermarkets often have delicatessen counters boasting a fine array of all kinds of sausages* from a wide variety of countries.

The best known of these sausages is the Frankfurter, a smooth-textured sausage with a mild flavour and thin, slightly rubbery skin. These are smoked and ready to eat, hot or cold. It is the Frankfurter which is traditionally used for hot dogs, and is served hot with German potato salad and mustards.

Cabanos is another German speciality. These can be used to add zing to any dish, as they have a very garlicky and spicy flavour. Their coarse texture is rather reminiscent of their Spanish and Italian cousins, Chorizo (used in paella) and Pepperoni (a regular garnish for pizzas). These are all too strong to eat on their own, but

Boiled Sausage with Rice Salad

cooked and combined with other ingredients and served with rice, bread, pasta or potatoes, they make a really hearty meal.

Toulouse sausages are remote French cousins of the basic banger. Like the everyday sausage, they can be served fried, grilled or as a deliciously spicy, garlicky main ingredient in soups or casseroles.

Be bold — experiment with the continental sausages your deli has to offer! Remember to remove the papery outer skin before eating them. If you are not sure whether the sausage needs cooking before you eat it, check the packet directions or ask at the delicatessen counter.

Boiled sausage with rice salad

19 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

2 × 241g / 8½oz boiling sausage rings*

SALAD

225g / 8oz long-grain rice
45-60ml / 3-4tbls French dressing
2 garlic cloves, crushed
200g / 7oz can sweetcorn, drained
½ red pepper, seeded and diced
½ green pepper, seeded and diced
4 spring onions, finely chopped
3 celery stalks, finely sliced
1 red-skinned apple, cored, chopped and tossed in lemon juice
salt and pepper

GARNISH

¼ cucumber, sliced
5 spring onions
small bunch of mustard and cress

SERVES 4

1 Cook the rice following the chart given in Part 9, page 249. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then stir in the French dressing and garlic. Set aside to cool.

2 Meanwhile, cook the sausage rings. Puncture the bags and prick the sausages evenly all over. Place rings on dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Turn them over and microwave for a further 2 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes. Cut the sausages into 6mm / ¼in slices and allow to cool.

3 Mix the rice with the sweetcorn, red and green peppers, chopped spring onions, celery and apple. Season to taste and toss well. Spoon the rice salad on to a large serving dish, arranging it in a round with the centre slightly hollowed out. Arrange the spring onions, like the spokes of a wheel, radiating from near the centre of the dish. Arrange five overlapping slices of sausages in groups between each pair of spring onions to form a ring. Place three overlapping slices of cucumber, just overlapping the first ring of sausage. Arrange five more slices of sausage then a cucumber ring, sausage, then mustard and cress.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use knackwurst in place of bockwurst; rookwurst in place of Dutch smoked pork sausage; rookwurst or Polish boiling sausage for boiling sausage ring.

Use Hungarian debrecena for zywiecka or wiejska; cacciatori for Toulouse sausages.

Microtips

If you are cooking continental sausages to serve on their own, it is not necessary to remove them from the packet before microwaving. Simply puncture the packet with the point of a knife, making sure that you also puncture the sausage skins to prevent the sausages from bursting during microwaving.

Deli sausages

German
Bockwurst — *mild, smoky flavour*
Bratwurst — *mild and herby*
Cabanos — *coarse, spicy and fatty*
Frankfurter — *mild, smoky*
Traditional German — *thick, mild, like a frankfurter*
Spanish
Chorizo — *strong, spicy, coarse*
Italian
Pepperoni — *like mini salami*
Polish
Zywiecka — *strong, fatty, garlic*
Wiejska — *like Zywiecka*
Dutch
Smoked sausage ring — *eat or reheat, like a frankfurter*
Frikandellen — *smoky, smooth*

German sausage salad

16 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb waxy red-skinned potatoes, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
150ml / ¼pt boiling water
salt
90ml / 6tbls mayonnaise or salad cream
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
15ml / 1tbls grainy mustard
5ml / 1tsp wine vinegar
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
pinch of dillweed
pepper
2 × 250g / 8.8oz traditional German sausages or large frankfurters

SERVES 4

1 Put potatoes, water and salt to taste in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until half-cooked; drain.
2 Put mayonnaise, parsley, mustard, vinegar, sugar, dillweed and salt and pepper to taste in bowl. Stir in the potatoes.
3 Place the two sausages round the edge of a serving dish and score diagonally at 5cm / 2in intervals. Place the salad in the centre.
4 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-15 minutes until cooked.

German Sausage Salad

Cook's notes

You can refrigerate this salad for up to 2 days. It is delicious served cold. To reheat one portion, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-7 minutes, stirring the potato twice during cooking.

Sausages and sauerkraut

12 mins

Standing time: none

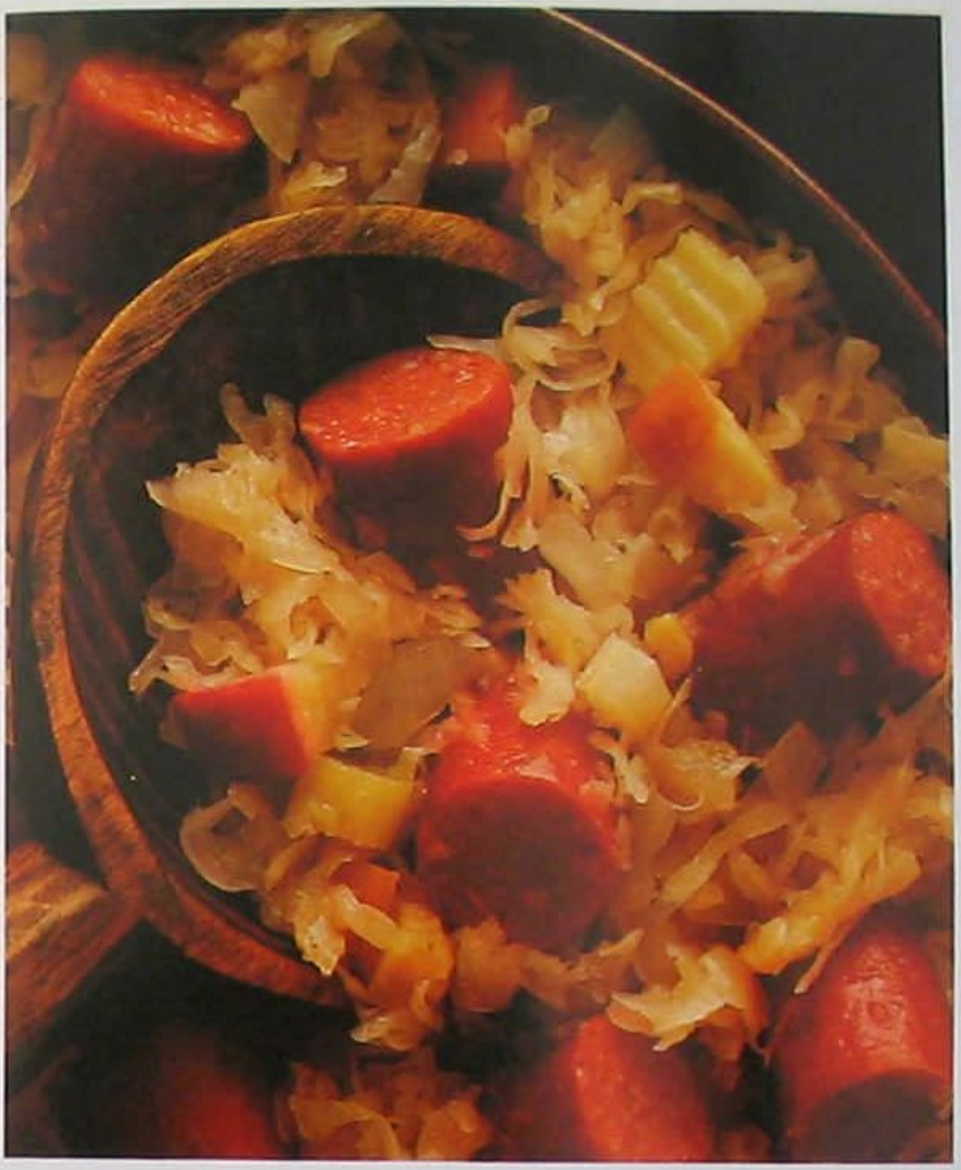
Nice served with black rye bread.

1 apple, chopped
1 onion, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
454g / 1lb jar sauerkraut, drained
376g / 13.3oz can crushed pineapple, drained
10ml / 2tsp sugar
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic paste
2 × 125g / 4.4oz cabanos sausages, cut into 2.5cm / 1in pieces

SERVES 4

1 Combine the apple, onion and celery in a casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until tender.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until very hot, stirring once.

VARIATION
Use eight continental-style frankfurters instead of cabanos.



Microtips

As the smoked sausages have quite a high fat content, scoring the cut surfaces with a fork will help to let some of the juices run out and drain, and baste the vegetables during microwaving.

Left: *Sausages and Sauerkraut*
Below: *Smoked Pork Sausage Kebabs*

Smoked pork sausage kebabs

6 mins

Standing time: none

22.5ml / 1½tbls brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
350g / 12oz can pineapple chunks, drained and juice reserved
2 × 227g / 8oz packets smoked Dutch pork sausage,* skinned
½ green pepper, seeded and cut into 12 × 2.5cm / 1in pieces

SERVES 4

1 Combine the brown sugar and cornflour in a small bowl. Stir in the soy sauce and reserved pineapple juice and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, until thickened; stir once. Reserve.

2 Cut each sausage into eight and score each flat side with the prongs of a fork. Thread the sausage, green pepper and pineapple on to wooden skewers.

3 Place the kebabs on a roasting rack and brush with half the soy glaze and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until thoroughly heated. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Turn over and rearrange the kebabs, brush well with the remaining glaze. Serve with boiled rice with the remaining glaze from the roasting rack poured over.

VARIATION

Thread small tomatoes and mushrooms on to the skewers to add different textures to kebabs.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use rookwurst.

Piquant sausage salad

23½ mins

Standing time: none

4 waxy potatoes, peeled and quartered
275ml / ½pt water
salt
4 rashers streaky bacon
1 onion, chopped
50g / 2oz sugar
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp celery seed
pepper
60ml / 2tbls cider vinegar
180g / 6.3oz packet German bockwurst* sausages

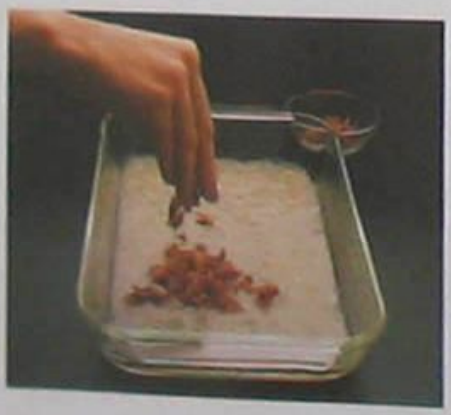
SERVES 4

How to microwave Piquant sausage salad

Place *the potato quarters in a 1.4L / 2½pt dish and add half of the water and pinch of salt. Mix well, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, rearranging the potatoes and drawing the outside ones to the centre after 4 minutes. The potatoes should be tender. Drain off any water and cut the potatoes into large chunks.*

Arrange *bacon rashers on a rack in a dish. Cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until crisp. Cut into strips and reserve the excess bacon fat.*

Add *the chopped onion to the fat in the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, until tender. Stir in the sugar, flour, celery seed and salt and pepper to taste. Mix well together with a wooden spoon.*



Mix in *the remaining water and the vinegar, then microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until the mixture thickens, stirring twice during cooking. Crumble the bacon into the mixture.*

Stir in *potato chunks and coat well with sauce. Arrange bockwurst on top; microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until piping hot, stirring the potatoes and rearranging bockwurst halfway through.*

Beer garden snack

6 mins

Standing time: none

If you cannot find rye rolls, use crusty brown rolls instead. Frankfurters can be substituted for the bockwurst.

1 onion, sliced into thin rings
15g / ½oz butter
2 × 180g / 6.3oz packets German bockwurst* sausages
8 rye rolls
German or French mustard

SERVES 4

1 Place the onion and butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes.
2 Arrange the bockwurst on top of the onions, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until hot.
3 Place the sausages in halved rolls, top with a few onion rings and a little mustard. Serve with a glass of beer.

Beer Garden Snack

Toulouse sausage stew

21½ mins

Standing time: none

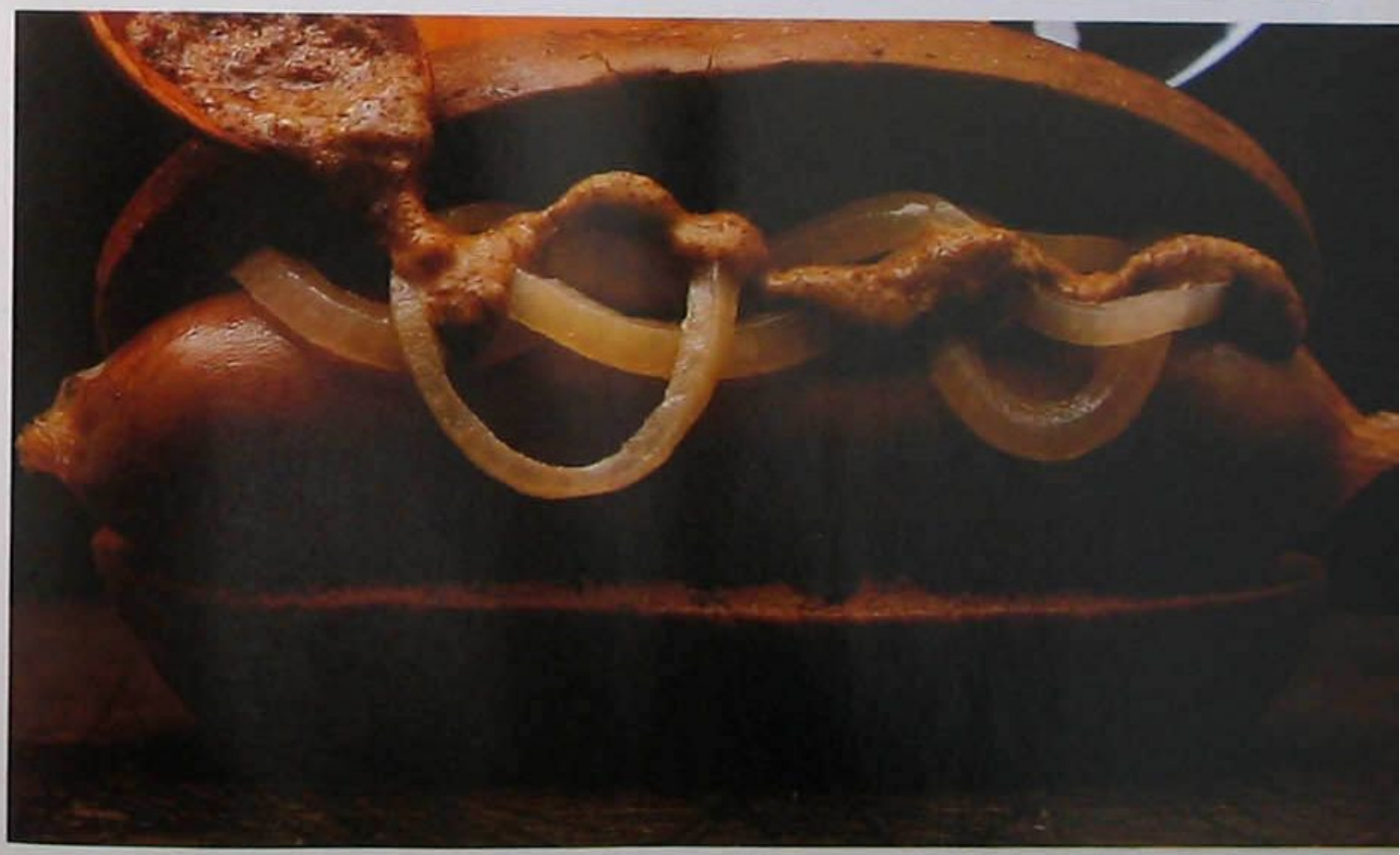
15g / 1oz butter
8 Toulouse sausages*
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
225g / 8oz unsmoked bacon, cut in 12mm / ½in cubes
1 garlic clove, crushed
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
425g / 15oz can cannellini beans, drained
30ml / 2tbls tomato paste
salt and pepper
275ml / ½pt chicken stock

SERVES 4

1 Heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Place the butter and sausages in the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 7½-8 minutes, turning the sausages after half the time.
2 Place the olive oil in a 1.4L / 2½pt dish and mix with the onion, bacon, garlic and thyme. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-5½ minutes, or until the onion is tender. Stir in the sausages, drained beans, tomato paste and seasoning to taste. Add the stock and stir well.
3 Cover the dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until the mixture is piping hot and the sausages are completely cooked through. Test the sausages by slicing one with a sharp knife — it is cooked when it is no longer pink inside.
4 Serve the stew hot with creamy mashed potato or with crisp French fries as a hearty supper dish.

Microtips

Remember, when using a browning dish, to check with your manufacturer's handbook. Never preheat the dish for longer than the recommended time, as this can damage the glass turntable or glass plate cooker base. Some manufacturers recommend placing the dish on an upturned heatproof glass plate or microwave trivet.



American muffins

American muffins — ideal for microwaving — are small sweet or savoury anytime cakes made in paper cases, quite different from the British tea-cakes which are served split and toasted.

American-style muffins (as opposed to the traditional British teatime variety) may be a new idea for many people. With a microwave you can cook to order for any occasion — and serving muffins could become an everyday habit.

Muffins are immensely versatile: crumble bacon into the mixture or add an all-American favourite, blueberries, for a special breakfast. Serve chunky wholemeal or cheese muffins with soups or chowders or serve savoury muffins as a main course accompaniment, almost like a vegetable.

Mixing is all-important; avoid overbeating, as this makes the muffins solid and heavy. When beating the dry ingredients, make sure that there are no pockets of unmixed flour. The uncooked mixture should be smooth, but with a slightly grainy texture.

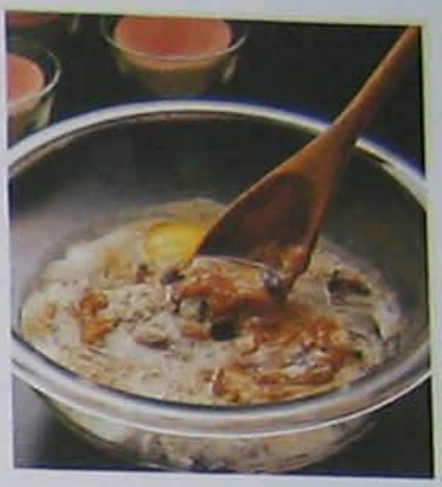
Microwave muffin batter needs to be more liquid than that used for conventional baking. Use double paper cake cases placed in ramekins, muffin trays or custard cups to support the mixture.

Uncooked muffin batter keeps well in the refrigerator for a few days. As microwaved muffins are best eaten freshly cooked and warm, cook only as many as you need at any one time.

Mexican Cheese Muffins

How to microwave Muffins

Use *a double thickness of paper cake cases to line the wells of a microwave muffin tray or individual ramekins or custard cups. If using a six-well tray for microwaving only three to four muffins, alternate the filled wells with spaces for more even cooking.*



Mix *the muffin ingredients quickly and lightly, until the mixture is just smooth and the dry particles are just moistened. Do not overbeat.*

Do not fill *the cake cases beyond half full, or the muffins will overflow as they rise. If using any topping, sprinkle on the top at this stage.*

Arrange *the muffins in their cups or ramekins in a circle. Microwave at 100% (High) for timings according to the recipes. Rearrange once.*

Remove *the cups to a wire rack when cooked and stand for 3-4 minutes. Any moist spots will dry on standing. Take from cups when cool.*

Mexican cheese muffins

10 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

MAKES 30

Choose 'dry' Cheddar — moist, vacuum-packed cheese is unsuitable.

225g / 8oz plain flour
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
1 packet Taco seasoning mix
100g / 4oz medium cornmeal
1 egg, beaten
275ml / ½pt milk
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated

1 Line six ramekin dishes or the wells of a microwave muffin tray with double paper cake cases.
2 Sift the flour, baking powder and salt into a large bowl and stir in the Taco seasoning and cornmeal. Add the egg and milk and mix to a thick, loose batter.
3 Use the mixture to half fill the prepared paper cases. Sprinkle a little of the cheese over the tops of the muffins. Microwave according to the steps shown above, at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes (500 watt, 3½-4 minutes), until just springy to touch; rearrange once.
4 Remove the cooked muffins and stand for 3 minutes. Take out, in their cases, when cool. Repeat with remaining mixture.

Microtips

To test to see if muffins are cooked, press the tops lightly with your finger — they should be springy to the touch, but still look quite moist on the surface. If, when you open the door of the cooker, the muffins starts to sink, they need slightly more cooking. Any moisture will dry out on standing.

Vegetable corn muffins

5¼ mins

Standing time: 9 mins

175g / 6oz plain flour
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
60ml / 4tbls medium cornmeal
5ml / 1tsp Italian seasoning
pinch of garlic powder
2 eggs, beaten
15ml / 1tbls oil
100g / 4oz sweetcorn, thawed if frozen, drained if canned
75ml / 3tbls milk
½ green pepper, finely chopped
½ small onion, finely chopped

MAKES 15

1 Line five ramekin dishes or the wells of a microwave muffin tray with double paper cake cases.
2 Sift the flour with the baking powder and salt into a large bowl. Add all the remaining ingredients and mix to a thick batter.
3 Use the mixture to half fill the prepared paper cases. Microwave, according to the steps on page 1105, at 100% (High) for 1¾-2¼ minutes (500 watt, 2¾-3¼ minutes) or until just springy to the touch.
4 Remove when cooked and stand for 3 minutes. Cool in their cases, on a wire rack. Repeat with the remaining muffins in two batches of five.

Carrot bran muffins

10 mins

Standing time: 12 mins

50g / 2oz bran
275ml / ½pt milk
1 large carrot, finely grated
225g / 8oz wholemeal flour
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
pinch of salt
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
1 egg, beaten
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda

MAKES 20

1 Line five ramekin dishes or the wells of a microwave muffin tray with double paper cake cases.
2 Mix the bran with half the milk and soak for 5-10 minutes.
3 Mix the carrot, flour, cinnamon, salt, sugar, oil, lemon juice and egg with the soaked bran.
4 Mix the baking powder and bicarbonate of soda with the remaining milk. Mix all ingredients to a dropping consistency.
5 Half fill the prepared cake cases with the batter. Microwave according to the steps on page 1105, at 100% (High) for 2½-2¾ minutes (500 watt, 3¼-3¾ minutes).
6 Remove as they are cooked. Stand for 3 minutes and cool. Repeat with three more batches.

Raisin orange muffins

5 mins

Standing time: 6 mins

75ml / 5tbls rolled oats
100g / 4oz wholemeal flour
30ml / 2tbls oil
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
pinch of salt
50g / 2oz raisins
2 eggs, lightly beaten
grated zest of ½ orange
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
90ml / 6tbls milk

MAKES 12

1 Line six ramekin dishes or the wells of a microwave muffin tray with double paper cake cases.
2 Put the rolled oats and flour into a large bowl and mix well. Add all the ingredients except the baking powder and milk and mix thoroughly.
3 Mix the baking powder and milk together and stir quickly into the other ingredients in the bowl, taking care not to overbeat.
4 Use the mixture to half fill the prepared paper cases and arrange in a ring in the cooker.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes (500 watt, 4-4½ minutes), see steps, page 1105.
6 Stand for 3 minutes, then cool on a wire rack. Take out in the cases when cool enough to handle. Repeat with the remaining six.

Refrigerator muffin mix

2½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

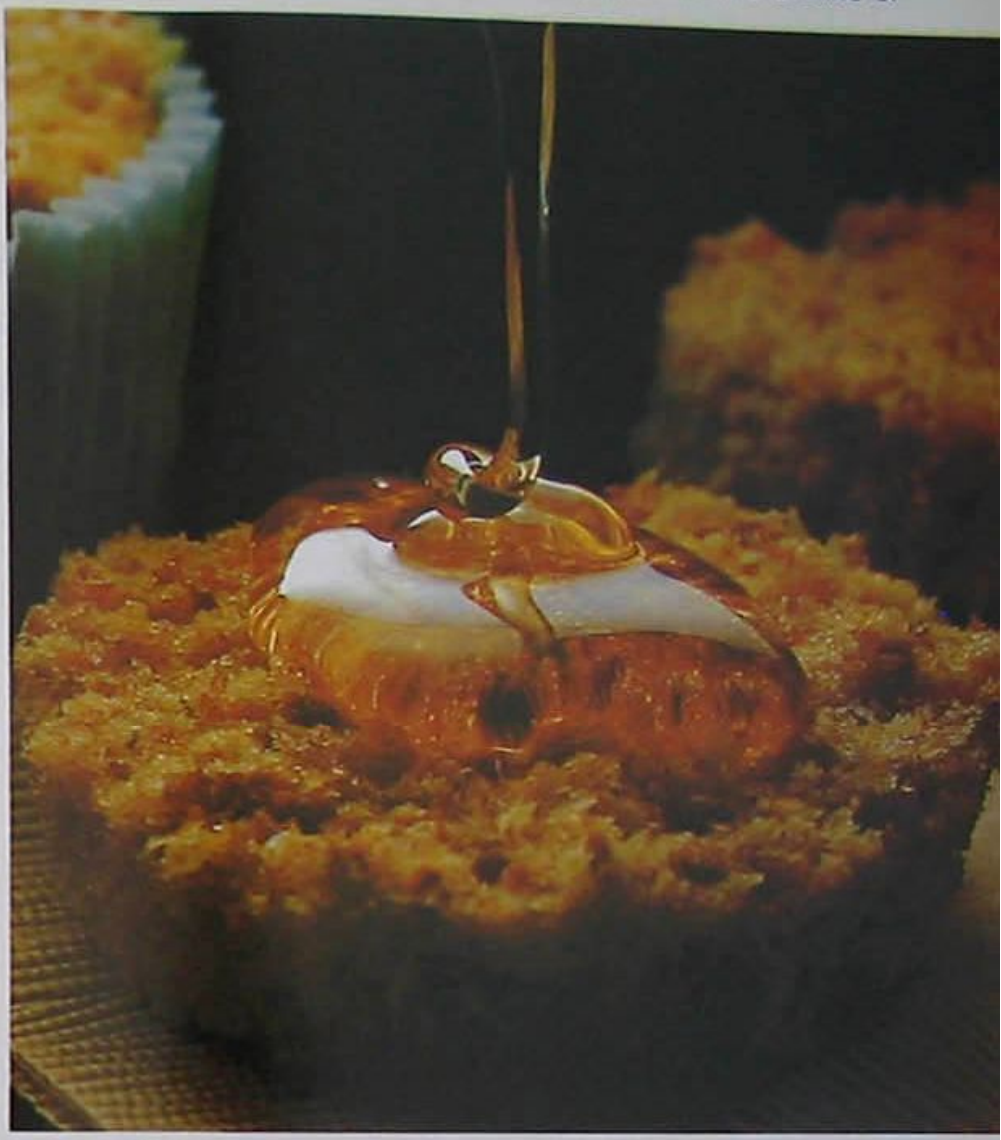
This mixture keeps well in the refrigerator for up to a week, so it is ideal for last-minute microwaving. For a party, you may like to make a bigger batch. You can quadruple the ingredients, as shown in the steps below.

125ml / 4fl oz boiling water
75g / 3oz bran
30ml / 2tbls runny honey
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
40g / 1½oz margarine, softened
1 egg, beaten
175g / 6oz plain flour, sifted
pinch of salt
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
60ml / 4tbls buttermilk

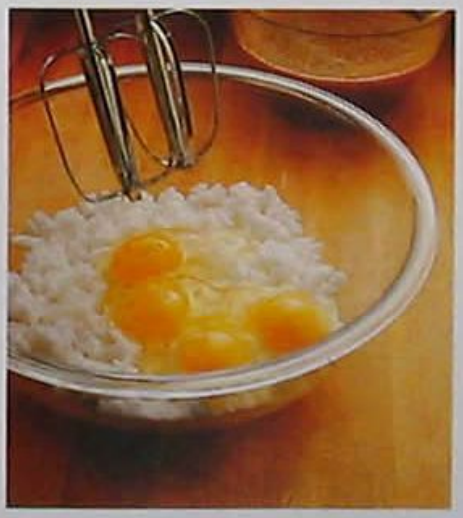
MAKES ENOUGH FOR 45-50 MUFFINS

Microtips

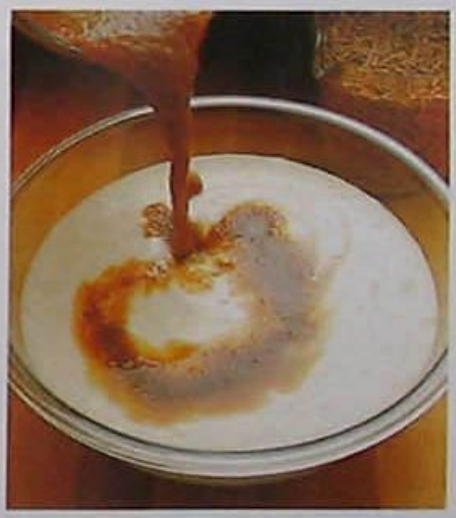
Toppings or treacle or brown sugar in the mixtures help to give an appetizing appearance. In some cases, the yellow of cornmeal provides colour.



How to make Refrigerator muffin mix



Mix *the boiling water with one third of the bran. Stir in the honey and set aside. In a large bowl, whisk the sugar and margarine together until light and fluffy. Add the egg and whisk for 2 minutes.*



Add *the flour, salt and soaked bran to the creamed mixture. Combine the bicarbonate of soda with the buttermilk and stir into the mixture with the remaining unsoaked bran, using a wooden spoon.*

Beat *thoroughly. When smooth, pour into a sealable polythene tub. Label with date and store in refrigerator for up to 1 week. Follow steps on page 1105 to cook, microwaving at 100% (High) for 2½-4½ minutes for six.*

Bacon muffins

3 mins

Standing time: 6 mins

225g / 8oz plain flour
7.5ml / 1½tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika
pinch of salt
50g / 2oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated
2 bacon rashers, cooked and finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
125ml / 4fl oz milk
45ml / 3tbls oil
1 egg, beaten

MAKES 12

1 Line six ramekins or the wells of a microwave muffin tray with double paper cake cases.
2 Sift the flour with the baking powder, paprika and salt and mix well.
3 Add the cheese, bacon and onion and mix well.
4 Combine the milk, oil and egg in a separate bowl and quickly stir into the dry ingredients, taking care not to overbeat.
5 Use the batter to three quarters fill the prepared paper cases. Spread the mixture evenly. Microwave at 100% (High), according to the steps on page 1105, for 1½-2 minutes (500 watt, 3 minutes) or until just cooked.
6 Stand for 3 minutes, then cool on a wire rack. Remove in their cases when cool enough to handle. Repeat with the remaining muffins.

Wholewheat muffins

3 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

225g / 8oz wholewheat flour
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
7.5ml / 1½tsp baking powder
pinch of salt
30ml / 2tbls black treacle
90ml / 6tbls milk
45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil
1 egg, beaten
50g / 2oz seedless raisins

MAKES 10

1 Line five ramekin dishes or the wells of a microwave muffin tray with double paper cake cases.
2 Mix the flour with the sugar, baking powder and salt in a bowl.
3 Combine the treacle, milk, oil and egg in a separate bowl, mix well, then pour into the dry mixture, stirring in the raisins. Mix to form a dropping consistency batter, taking care not to overbeat.
4 Use the mixture to half fill the prepared paper cases. Microwave according to the steps on page 1105, at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes (500 watt, 2½ minutes), or until springy. Stand for 5 minutes. Repeat with remaining five.

Above: *Wholewheat Muffins*
Below: *Bacon Muffins*

Cook's notes

It is important to distribute the raising agent evenly in the dry mixture, so sift the ingredients well. (Sometimes it helps to sift the ingredients together several times.) Where coarse textures such as cornmeal are included and can't be sifted, mix the raising agent with the liquid and mix into the other dry ingredients immediately, by hand or using an electric beater.

A meal-in-a-bun

Produce a tasty snack meal in minutes with these delicious variations on the hamburger and sandwich theme. Buns bulging with hot savoury fillings make a nutritious treat for all the family.

When you are in a hurry and need some good, filling food fast, what could be quicker or easier than a meal-in-a-bun? With the microwave you can produce a tasty snack in only a few minutes and, if you are really short of time, warm up a shop-bought burger — they taste so much better piping hot.

To keep a crusty roll really crisp, wrap it in absorbent paper before microwaving it, then add a delicious filling. Once you have tried a delectable double-decker cheeseburger, you may never again be prepared to settle for less!

To turn your meal-in-a-bun into a complete lunch or supper, serve with a crisp mixed salad and, perhaps, a baked potato — microwaved, of course.

Hot Deli Delight

Hot deli delight

4 mins

Standing time: none

1 French loaf (about 225g / 8oz)

DELI DRESSING
1 garlic clove, cut in half
60ml / 4tbls mayonnaise or salad cream
1.5ml / ¼tsp made mustard
1.5ml / ¼tsp poppy or sesame seeds
salt and pepper

FILLING
50g / 2oz alfalfa or beansprouts
100g / 4oz thinly sliced cooked meat (beef, turkey or ham)
1 tomato, cut into 6 slices
50g / 2oz mushrooms, sliced
6 thin slices green pepper
6 thin slices onion
75g / 3oz Cheddar or Gruyère cheese, cut into 4 slices

SERVES 3

1 Split the bread lengthways.

How to keep a crusty roll crisp

Cut *a piece of smooth foil the same size as the roll. Place it in the cooker, shiny side up; lay a sheet of absorbent paper over the foil. Place a cup of water in cooker to absorb excess energy.*

Layer *filling on bottom half of roll. Place on absorbent paper; microwave at 100% (High) until warm. Cover with top half; microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, until warm.*

2 For the dressing, rub the inside of a small bowl with the cut sides of the garlic. Mix the mayonnaise, mustard, poppy seeds and seasoning in the bowl. Spread on both sides of the loaf.

3 For the filling, start with the alfalfa, then add the rolled up meat, then the vegetables in layers. Finish with the cheese and replace the top of the loaf.

4 Cut loaf in half and stand each piece on absorbent paper in the microwave, propped up with heat-proof glasses if necessary. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the cheese melts and the loaf is warmed. Serve warm.

Hot deli delight for one: Use a French bread roll or half a loaf. Using half the ingredients, follow the method above but microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for only 45-60 seconds, or until cheese melts. For four, double quantities; microwave loaves separately.

Hot Salt Beef Roll

Microtips

Microwave energy drives moisture to the surface of breads. In the case of soft breads and rolls, a piece of absorbent paper will absorb the moisture, but crusty rolls may soften if they are not shielded, see steps above. Check with your cooker manufacturer's instructions before using foil in your microwave.

Hot salt beef rolls

2 mins

Standing time: none

4 poppy seed rolls
350g-450g / ¾-1lb salt beef*, thinly sliced
English or German mustard to taste
pickled cucumbers to serve (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Cut the rolls in half and pile half the salt beef into the centre of each one. Replace the tops and place on a plate lined with absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until the rolls are warm to the touch.
2 Spread liberally with mustard and serve with pickled cucumbers.

VARIATION
Make the salt beef sandwiches with thinly sliced rye bread for a really traditional Jewish dish. Cook as for the rolls.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use corned beef to replace salt beef.

Hot vegetarian rolls

1½ mins

Standing time: none

4 long crusty rolls
30ml / 2tbls French mustard
225g / 8oz Cheddar cheese, cut into 8 slices
4 tomatoes, sliced into rings
2 red onions, sliced
8 pimento-stuffed olives, to garnish (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Cut the rolls in half lengthways. Spread 7.5ml / ½tbls mustard on the bottom of each roll. Lay two cheese slices in each roll, wrap in absorbent paper and place on a plate in the cooker. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until the cheese melts.
2 Top the cheese with tomato and onion slices. Attach two olives to the top of each roll with cocktail sticks, if liked, and serve.

Hot Vegetarian Roll

VARIATION
Substitute salad cream for the mayonnaise and add shredded lettuce to rolls just before serving. For a meaty roll, use any type of delicatessen sausage or meat, such as salami or pork luncheon meat.

Hot vegetarian roll for one: use quarter quantities and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, until hot.

Slimmer's notes

These filling and tasty vegetarian rolls make a nourishing family snack. To cut the calories, use 65g / 2½oz low-fat Cheddar-type cheese per person — this gives just 280 Cal / 1175 kJ per portion — ideal for slimmers.

Double-decker cheeseburger

13 mins

Standing time: none

15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
8 frozen hamburgers
1 onion, finely sliced
60ml / 4tbls mayonnaise
4 hamburger buns, split horizontally into 3 slices
4 slices cheese
4 crisp lettuce leaves, shredded

SERVES 4

1 Preheat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add the oil, then the hamburgers and onion. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, until done to your liking, turning the burgers once.
2 Remove the onion from the dish and stir into the mayonnaise. Place a slice of cheese on the bottom slice of each roll; top with half the mayonnaise mixture and one of the hamburgers, then the shredded lettuce.
3 Lay the middle slice of bun on top, spread over the remaining mayonnaise, add a second burger and top with the bun. Repeat with all the buns.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until the cheeseburgers are thoroughly heated.

Freezer notes

You can use frozen buns for this recipe. There is no need to thaw them, since it is easier to slice the buns while they are still frozen. They heat up very fast, so it is not necessary to adjust the cooking time for microwaving the double-decker cheeseburgers.

Chilli cheese dogs

3 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz canned minced beef
5ml / 1tsp tomato purée or paste
1.5-2.5ml / ¼-½tsp chilli powder
4 hot dog sausages
4 hot dog buns, partially split
50g / 2oz Cheddar or Edam cheese, thinly sliced

SERVES 4

To reheat take-away rolls and burgers

Remove *roll, sandwich or burger from its container and wrap in absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, until warm to the touch.*

Alternatively, *to ensure that filling is warm, remove top of bun. Place bottom half on absorbent paper; microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, until warm.*

Replace *top of bun; wrap securely in absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds. If heating 2 rolls, rearrange after half the time.*

1 In a small bowl, combine the minced beef, tomato purée and chilli powder. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until hot, stirring halfway through.
2 Place sausages in buns. Arrange on a plate lined with absorbent paper and cover with absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until sausages feel warm, rearranging after half the time.
3 Open buns and spoon chilli over sausages. Place a slice of cheese on top of chilli. Close buns and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until cheese melts slightly.

VARIATION
For a milder version for children use canned Mexican beef instead of the minced beef and omit the tomato purée and chilli powder. You can also use any leftover cooked minced beef.

Hot chicken muffins

2 mins

Standing time: none

130g / 4.5oz can chicken mushroom topping or chicken in white sauce
45ml / 3tbls mayonnaise
45ml / 3tbls sweet pickle, or chutney well drained
75g / 3oz Cheddar or Gouda cheese, grated
pinch of onion salt or powder
4 muffins, split and toasted

SERVES 4

1 In a bowl, mix together all the ingredients except the muffins. Spread the mixture over the muffins. Arrange muffins in a dish lined with absorbent paper or on a roasting rack.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until the topping is bubbling and hot, rotating the dish after half the time.

Hot chicken muffin for one: use one-third of the ingredients and microwave for 30-60 seconds.

Hot Chicken Muffins

Sweet jelly desserts

Microwaving sweet jellies is child's play. Dissolving gelatine and jelly tablets is simple and straightforward — and there are no sticky pans to clean afterwards.

Sweet jelly desserts are fun to make and always popular with the family. Make them, with the help of your microwave, using powdered gelatine, commercial tablet jelly or jelly crystals.

Powdered gelatine is easy to use and very versatile. It is colourless, flavourless and unsweetened, and can be used for both sweet and savoury dishes. It comes in sachets* or in larger tubs; each sachet contains 17.5ml / 3½tsp powdered gelatine.

Commercially-prepared flavoured jelly tablets come in a large range of colours and flavours. They are easy to use and can make the basis of a wide range of desserts; but are extremely sweet.

Dissolving gelatine

The microwave makes dissolving gelatine powder easier than ever. Simply sprinkle the powder over cold water, pop in the microwave to heat — no need to soften first — then stir to dissolve. Be careful not to overheat: boiling water destroys

Fruity Layer Jelly

the setting quality of gelatine. When the water is hot, stirring briskly with a fork will be enough to dissolve the gelatine evenly. If you are concerned about overheating, heat the water first, until it almost boils, then sprinkle over the gelatine and stir.

Dissolving jelly tablets

Jelly tablets come in a variety of different sizes. Divide them into cubes so they melt quickly and dissolve in a small amount of water in the microwave. As they come in a variety of concentrations make the dissolved cubes up with extra liquid according to manufacturer's instructions.

How to dissolve jelly tablets

Cut or break *tablet into cubes. Place in a bowl with 150ml / ¼pt water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir to dissolve, then make up as manufacturer's instructions.*

How to dissolve powdered gelatine

Sprinkle *1 sachet* or 17.5ml / 3½tsp powdered gelatine over 125ml / 4fl oz cold water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, then stir well to dissolve.*

Alternatively, *place gelatine in jug. Stir in 200ml / 7fl oz cold water and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½ minutes, stirring after first and second minute.*

Stages of setting

For whisked jellies, *or if adding other ingredients, cool jelly until thickened and syrupy, with the consistency of unbeaten egg white.*

For layered jellies; *cool each layer until almost set before adding the next. The surface should be slightly sticky, not completely firm.*

Fruit layer jelly

6 mins

Standing time: none

1.2L / 2¼pt water
1 lemon jelly tablet, cut into cubes
6 maraschino cherries
1 drained canned pineapple ring
1 raspberry jelly tablet, cut into cubes
1 lime jelly tablet, cut into cubes

SERVES 6-8

1 Place 150ml / ¼pt water in a measuring jug and add the lemon jelly cubes. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, then stir well. Add 275ml / ½pt cold water, cool until thickened and syrupy.

2 Arrange the cherries evenly spaced apart, in a ring in the base of a 1.1L / 2pt jelly mould. Pour in 6mm / ¼in jelly to hold the fruit in place and chill until firm but still sticky. Pour in three quarters of the remaining lemon jelly and chill until tacky.

3 Cut the pineapple ring into six equal pieces and arrange flat on the jelly around the edge of the mould. Carefully pour over the remaining lemon jelly (resoftening if necessary, see Microtips page 1116). Chill until almost set, but still tacky.

4 Make the raspberry jelly in the same way as the lemon jelly in step 1. Chill until syrupy.

5 Pour the syrupy raspberry jelly on to the tacky lemon jelly. Carefully transfer the basin to the refrigerator and chill until set.

6 Make the lime jelly in the same way as the lemon jelly in step 1. Pour the jelly into a moistened, shallow tray and chill until set; turn out and chop coarsely.

7 To serve: loosen the top edge of the jelly, then dip the bottom of mould briefly in hot water. Invert on to a flat serving plate and shake firmly to release. Lift off the jelly mould. Decorate around the base of the mould with the chopped lime jelly.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use 17.5ml / 3½tsp 'loose' gelatine or even 20ml / 4tsp in warmer weather.

Cook's notes

Fresh pineapple contains an enzyme which destroys the setting qualities of gelatine. Canned pineapple and pineapple juice can both be used as the manufacturing process they undergo destroys the enzyme.

Fresh fruit jelly flan

5¼ mins

Standing time: none

1 large lemon
15ml / 1tbls sugar
17.5ml / 3½tsp powdered gelatine (1 sachet)
125ml / 4fl oz water
15g / ½oz butter
5 large digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
2 large peaches, skinned, stoned, sliced and brushed with lemon juice
350g / 12oz strawberries
450g / 1lb blueberries or halved and seeded black grapes
lemon twists, to decorate

SERVES 6

1 Grate lemon zest from ends of lemon to make 2.5ml / ½tsp zest. Cut four thin slices from centre of lemon and set aside. Squeeze juice from remaining lemon.

2 Place the juice, zest and sugar in a measuring jug and make up to 275ml / ½pt with water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the mixture is hot and the sugar dissolved.

3 Sprinkle the gelatine over the 125ml / 4fl oz water and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes. Stir well to dissolve. Cool the gelatine slightly; then pour into the lemon liquid, whisking thoroughly.

4 Place the butter in a 23cm / 9in flan dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-20 seconds, or until melted, then stir in the biscuit crumbs. Press the crumbs against the sides and over the base of the dish. Microwave for 1½ minutes, rotating the dish a half turn once. Leave to cool.

5 Layer the sliced peaches in the base of the pie and pour over enough of the lemon jelly to cover. Top with a layer of strawberries, then blueberries or grapes. Pour over the remaining jelly.

6 Chill for 2 hours or until set. Decorate with lemon twists.

Fresh Fruit Jelly Flan

Microtips

To soften jelly: if a jelly sets too soon, soften it in the microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½ minutes, or until melted, and stir well. Incorporate any extra ingredients, or pour into a dish, then chill again until set.

Layered cherry jelly

3 mins

Standing time: none

575ml / 1pt cherryade or cherry creaming soda
35ml / 7tsp powdered gelatine
411g / 14½oz can black cherries in syrup
170g / 6oz can evaporated milk

SERVES 6-8

1 Place 275ml / ½pt cherryade in a measuring jug. Sprinkle gelatine over the cherryade and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes. Stir well to dissolve and when the mixture is completely clear, add remaining cherryade.
2 Place half the cherries and all the juice from the can into a 20cm / 8in wetted round mould. Add half the jelly mixture and stir well. Chill for about 30 minutes, until nearly set.
3 Stir together the remaining cherries and jelly mixture. When the jelly is on setting point, whisk the evaporated milk until doubled in volume. Stir in the jelly mixture. Pour over the layer of set jelly, then chill for at least 3 hours to set completely.
4 To unmould: dip the mould into a bowl of hot water, then invert on to a flat serving plate. Hold together and shake firmly until you feel the jelly release.

Ginger orange squares

11½ mins

Standing time: none

75g / 3oz butter
225g / 8oz ginger biscuits, crushed
30ml / 6tsp custard powder
30ml / 2tbls sugar
575ml / 1pt milk
1 orange jelly tablet, cut into cubes
312g / 11oz can mandarin orange segments, drained and broken
275ml / ½pt whipping cream

SERVES 8

1 Place the butter in a 20-23cm / 8-9in square or 30 × 18cm / 12 × 7in rectangular baking dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute or until melted. Stir in biscuit crumbs. Reserve 30ml / 2tbls of the biscuit crumb mixture.
2 Press remaining mixture firmly over the base of the dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, rotating a half turn once.
3 Place the custard powder and sugar in an 850ml / 1½pt bowl. Add a little milk and stir well to blend. Stir in the remaining milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stir well then microwave for a further 4 minutes, stirring well every minute, or until the custard boils and thickens.
4 Dissolve the jelly tablet, see step, page 1115. Stir into the custard with the mandarin segments.
5 Whip the cream until it just holds its shape, then fold into the custard. Spoon over the crumbs and sprinkle with reserved crumbs. Chill for 4 hours to set.

Top: *Layered Cherry Jelly*
Above: *Ginger Orange Squares*

Chop and change

Make more of a favourite standby — lamb chops. With the microwave to make the going easy, these mouthwatering recipes give a new meaning to 'chops for a change'.

Lamb chops with mint sauce has long been a classic combination but there are many different ways to ring the changes with this favourite meat.

There are three types of chop to choose from (excluding best-end cutlets from the neck).

Butterfly chops are especially attractive. Taken from the loin 'saddle' before it is split, they give a double chop, joined in the middle by a central bone. They weigh between 225-275g / 8-10oz — generous enough to satisfy the heartiest appetite.

Loin chops are easily recognised by the small T-shaped bone at the thick end of each chop. These weigh anything between 100-175g /4-6oz. Buy one large chop or two small ones per person.

Chump chops, cut from the top of the leg, look more like steaks but have a small central bone. These weigh more than loin chops, about 175-225g / 6-8oz each, so serve one per person.

Since they are taken from the choicest most tender cuts, lamb chops cook very successfully in the microwave. However, it is important to trim off most of the fat first. A little fat is necessary to prevent the meat drying out, but excess fat does not have time to crisp and would look unappetizing.

Gingered Butterfly Chops

When microwaving plain or glazed chops, use a browning dish if possible. This sears the surface of the meat, giving a good appearance. Alternatively cook and serve with a sauce. Turn chops and remove covering halfway through cooking. This lets the surface dry a little and gives a better texture.

Microtips

Save the juices from the chops to make a tasty sauce. Blend 2.5ml / ½tsp cornflour with 100ml / 3½fl oz white wine. Stir into skimmed lamb juices and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until hot and thickened, stirring once.

RAY DUNS

Stuffed lamb chops

18 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 large loin chops
10ml / 2tsp vegetable oil

STUFFING
1-2 cloves garlic, crushed
50g / 2oz button mushrooms, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp grated lemon zest
15ml / 1tsp hot horseradish sauce
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

Cook's notes

Leek sauce goes perfectly with lamb and can be made in just a few minutes. Melt 25g / 1oz butter at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Add 175g / 6oz chopped leeks and continue microwaving for 4 minutes, stirring once, until leeks are tender. Cool, then purée in blender with 150ml / ¼pt single cream, 10ml / 2tsp lemon juice and pinch of ground mace. Pour into a heated sauce boat and heat at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes just before serving.

How to microwave Stuffed lamb chops

Mix *the stuffing ingredients. Lay chops on board and place a quarter of stuffing against lean side of each chop. Bring end of chop around stuffing and secure with cocktail stick.*

Preheat *a large browning dish for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add the oil, tilting the dish so oil coats the base. Add lamb chops and sear on both sides.*

Cover *loosely with buttered greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 5 minutes.*

Remove *paper and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-10 minutes, or until lamb is tender. (The meat should be slightly pink.) Remove cocktail sticks and allow to stand for 5 minutes.*

Gingered butterfly chops

24 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 butterfly (or 8 loin) lamb chops

GLAZE
2.5cm / 1in piece fresh root ginger, peeled and finely chopped
10ml / 2tsp vegetable oil
5ml / 1tsp grated lime zest
15g / ½oz butter
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Make the glaze: place ginger, oil, lime zest, butter and seasoning in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, to melt the butter.
2 Heat a browning dish in microwave for 5 minutes, or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add 15ml / 1tbls of the ginger mixture, tilting the dish to coat the base. Add the chops, pressing down well for maximum contact.
3 Brush the chops with a little more glaze, cover with buttered greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 5-6 minutes.
4 Remove paper, turn chops over and brush with more glaze. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes or until tender.
5 Spoon over remaining glaze, then stand for 5 minutes.

Apricot Lamb Chops

Barbecued lamb chops

15¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Chilli relish adds spice to this dish, but if you like really hot food, add a dash of Tabasco as well.

15g / ½oz butter
½ small onion, chopped
60ml / 4tbls chilli relish
30ml / 2tbls runny honey
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
5ml / 1tsp malt vinegar
2.5ml / ½tsp mild chilli seasoning
salt
4 large lamb loin chops

Barbecued Lamb Chops

SERVES 4

1 Place butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds or until melted. Add onion, cover and microwave for a further 2 minutes or until softened, stirring once.
2 Add chilli relish, honey, tomato purée, vinegar, chilli seasoning and salt and stir well.
3 Arrange chops on a roasting rack in a large dish. Spoon a little of the sauce over chops, cover loosely with buttered greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
4 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for a further 5 minutes. Remove paper, turn chops over and baste with a little more sauce. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-10 minutes or until tender.
5 Remove and discard excess fat from meat juices then add the skimmed juices to the remaining sauce and stand for 5 minutes.
6 Microwave sauce at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until heated through. Serve with lamb.

Apricot glazed chops

14¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 large lamb loin chops

GLAZE
45ml / 3tbls apricot jam
30ml / 2tbls soft dark brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Mix jam, sugar, lemon juice, soy sauce and seasoning in a bowl and blend well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds, or until sugar has dissolved and jam has melted, stirring once.
2 Arrange chops on a roasting rack in a large dish with meatiest parts to the outside. Brush with a little glaze. Cover the chops loosely with buttered greaseproof paper.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 5-6 minutes.
4 Remove paper and turn chops over. Brush with more glaze and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-10 minutes or until tender, basting several times with glaze. Stand for 5 minutes to complete cooking.
5 Meanwhile, skim any excess fat from the meat juices in the dish. Add the juices to the remaining glaze and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes until hot. Serve the sauce poured over the chops. Serve with rice and fresh vegetables or a salad.

Greek kebabs

6½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

60ml / 4tbls olive oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp chopped mint
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground coriander
salt and pepper
3 lean lamb chump chops, cut into 2.5cm / 1in chunks, fat and bone discarded
2 small onions, quartered
8 large black olives, stoned
8 lemon slices
8 cherry tomatoes or 2 medium tomatoes, quartered

SERVES 4

1 Mix oil, garlic, lemon juice, mint, coriander and seasoning in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds until warm.
2 Add lamb and stir. Cover and marinate in refrigerator for 2-4 hours.
3 Thread on to four wooden bamboo skewers, with onions, olives, lemons and tomatoes.
4 Place kebabs on a large shallow dish and brush with marinade juices left in bowl.
5 Cover with buttered greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, until meat is tender, turning twice. Stand for 3 minutes.

Microtips

Encircle tomatoes with each of the lemon slices, threading the skewer through the lemon twice. This prevents tomatoes falling off skewer as they cook.

Greek Kebabs

Gateaux to freeze

A gateau is always a really special treat. Now with the freezer/ microwave combination you can make one in advance, then produce a spectacular surprise with the greatest of ease.

Large baked cakes are so handy for freezing. You can make up one or two at a time and store in the freezer ready for a surprise party.

A ring mould is ideal for cooking cakes as it encourages even cooking. A round dish is next best as there are no protruding corners to over-cook.

Always stand the cake dish on an upturned saucer in the cooker so the microwaves can reach all sides of the cake, and turn the dish at regular intervals.

Freezing

Iced cakes do not freeze for as long as those left undecorated. If preferred, freeze the cake sponge and then ice after thawing.

There are two ways to freeze cakes, either whole or in slices, which are quicker and easier to handle (see Freezer notes, below). Careful freezer treatment is important with iced cakes or damage occurs during freezing. Follow steps, page 1127, for freezing plainly iced or un-iced cakes. Cakes with delicate decoration must be stored in rigid boxes.

Thawing

Watch carefully for melting icing during thawing. If this starts to happen, let the cake stand to complete thawing. Once thawed, frozen cakes should be eaten the same day as they stale quickly.

Freezer notes

Interleave cake slices with freezer tissue so individual pieces can be removed and thawed as required. Thaw one slice at 20-30% (Defrost) for 10-15 seconds, watching for melting. Stand 5 minutes.

Pineapple Coconut Cake

Pineapple coconut cake

15¾ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Thawing time: 5 mins

Standing after thawing: 10 mins

2 × 225g / 8oz packets Victoria sandwich or sponge cake mix
2 × 225g / 8oz cans crushed pineapple
3 eggs
45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil
25g / 1oz shredded coconut

ICING AND DECORATION
50g / 2oz shredded coconut
50g / 2oz butter or margarine
350g / 12oz icing sugar, sifted
30ml / 2tbls rum
MAKES 2 × 15 PIECES

How to microwave Pineapple coconut cake

Line *the base and sides of two 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in cake dishes with a double layer of baking parchment, overhanging at the edges of the dishes. Combine the cake mixes, pineapple, eggs and oil in a large bowl and beat with an electric mixer at low speed for 30 seconds.*

Beat *at medium speed for 2 minutes, scraping the bowl occasionally to incorporate all the mixture. Stir in the shredded coconut. Divide equally between the cake dishes. Microwave one dish, on an inverted saucer or plate, at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, rotating a quarter turn once.*

Increase *power to 100% (High) and microwave for 1-2 minutes, or until the top springs back when lightly pressed in the centre with fingertips; or insert a wooden skewer in the centre — it should come out clean with no pieces of unbaked mix attached.*

Let stand *directly on the work surface for 5-10 minutes to complete cooking before leaving to cool in the dish placed on a wire rack. Repeat with the other layer. Meanwhile, spread the shredded coconut for the decoration on a paper plate.*

Microwave *the coconut at 100% (High) for 1½-3 minutes, or until golden and toasted, stirring two or three times. Place the butter in a bowl and reduce power to 50% (Medium). Cover the bowl and microwave for 10-15 seconds, or until butter is softened.*

Add *the icing sugar and rum to the softened butter. (If preferred, flavour with a few drops of vanilla flavouring instead of rum). Beat until smooth. Add 15ml / 1tbls water, a few drops at a time, to give the right spreading consistency.*

Ice *the tops of the cooled cakes; sprinkle each with half the coconut. Remove from cake dishes by gently lifting up parchment. Transfer layers to a wire rack and open-freeze until firm. Wrap separately; label and freeze up to 1 month.*

To serve: *unwrap one cake and microwave on a plate at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5-6 minutes until a wooden skewer can be easily inserted and the icing softens but does not melt, rotating dish quarter turn every minute. Stand 10-15 minutes.*

Chocolate layer cake

21¼ mins

Standing time: 10-20 mins

Thawing time: 6 mins

Standing after thawing: 20 mins

TOPPING

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
75g / 3oz digestive or plain sweet biscuits
50g / 2oz chopped nuts
100g / 4oz dark chocolate

CAKE

50g / 2oz dark chocolate
200g / 7oz plain flour, sifted
275g / 10oz sugar
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
4 eggs
175g / 6fl oz milk
75g / 3oz butter, softened
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring

TO SERVE

225ml / 8fl oz whipping cream
45ml / 3tbls icing sugar, sifted
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES 8-10 SLICES

Freezer notes

Place each wrapped cake in a rigid plastic container. This will protect the cake from damage during storage.

How to microwave Chocolate layer cake

For the topping: *place butter in bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds to melt. Stir in the biscuit crumbs. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute; stir once. Add the nuts. Line base of two 23cm / 9in cake dishes with baking parchment circles cut to size.*

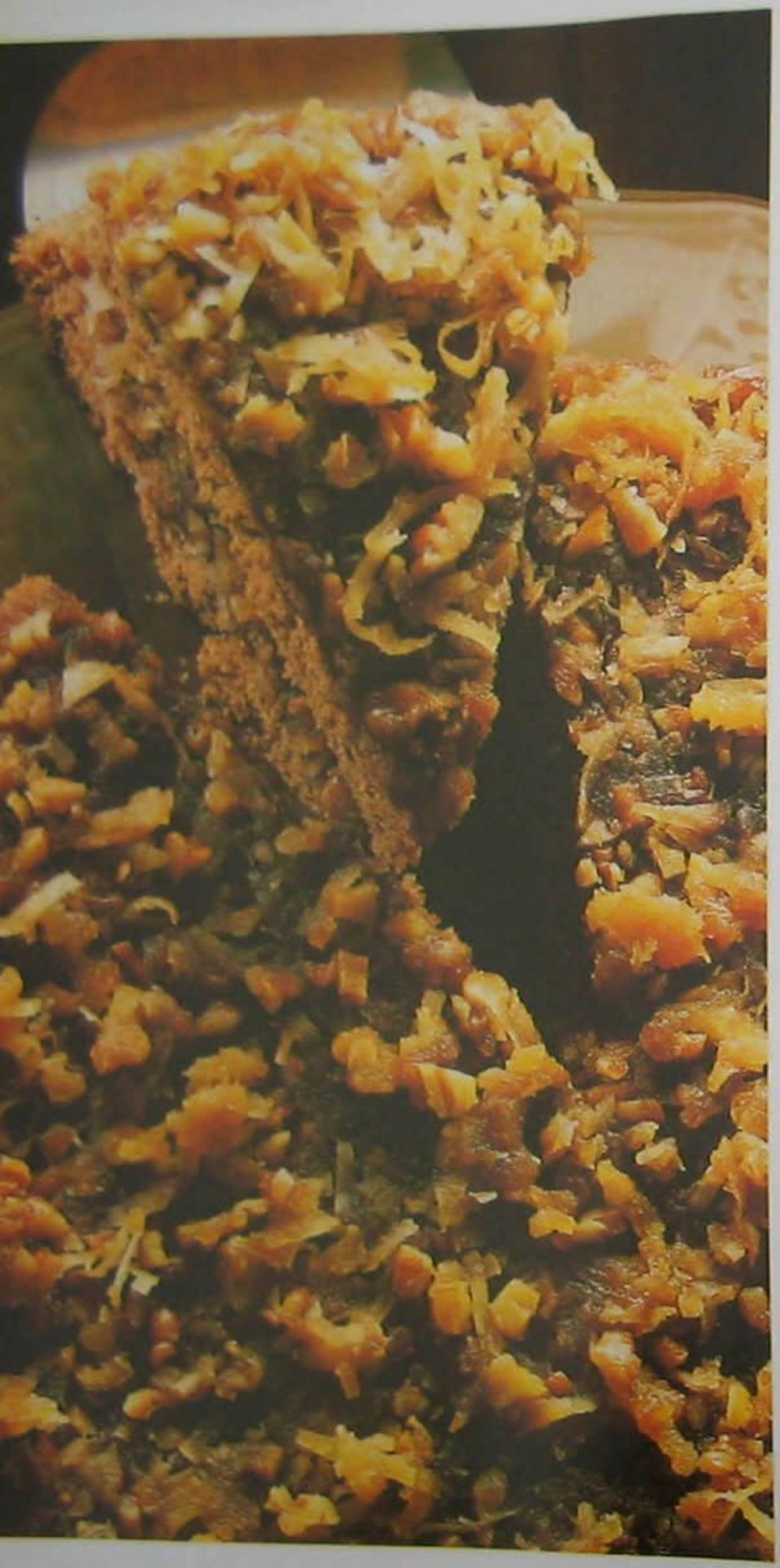
For the cake: *microwave chocolate at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes. Combine all cake ingredients, except chocolate, in a large bowl. Beat with an electric mixer at low speed for 30 seconds, then at medium speed for 2 minutes. Stir chocolate, then beat into cake mixture.*

Spread *half of mixture in each dish. Microwave one dish at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, rotating quarter turn once. Sprinkle with half nut topping. Increase power to 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until springy; turn once. Stand 5-10 minutes; turn out to cool. Repeat with other dish.*

Place *chocolate for topping in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes until melted; stir well. Drizzle half the chocolate over top of each cake. Place on a wire rack and open freeze until just firm. Wrap layers separately, taking care not to damage decoration; label and freeze up to 3 months.*

To thaw: *unwrap one layer and place on a plate. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes, until a wooden skewer can be easily inserted and top is springy when pressed; rotate quarter turn twice. Stand 10-15 minutes to complete thawing. Repeat, microwaving on absorbent paper.*

To serve: *whip the cream with the icing sugar and vanilla flavouring in a chilled bowl until standing in soft peaks. Spread two thirds over the cake layer on the serving plate. Top with the remaining cake layer. Pipe a border of the remaining whipped cream to decorate.*



Moist chocolate cake

15¼ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Thawing time: 8 mins

Standing after thawing: 10 mins

50g / 2oz margarine
75g / 3oz soft brown sugar
75g / 3oz desiccated coconut
75g / 3oz walnuts, chopped
175g / 6oz butter
175g / 6oz plain flour, sifted
175g / 6oz sugar
45ml / 3tbls cocoa powder, sifted
7.5ml / 1½tsp baking powder
225ml / 8fl oz milk
3 eggs
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES 8-10 SLICES

1 Line the base of two 20cm / 8in round cake dishes with grease-proof paper. Place half the margarine in each dish and microwave each at 100% (High) for 30 seconds.

2 Combine the brown sugar, coconut and chopped nuts. Sprinkle over dish bases.

3 Soften butter in a bowl at 30% (Low) for 10-15 seconds. Add remaining ingredients and beat with electric mixer at low speed, then medium for 2 minutes. Spread half mixture in each dish.

4 Place one dish on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, rotating half turn once. Increase power to 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until the cake is springy.

5 Stand 5 minutes before turning out on to a wire rack to cool. Remove paper, scraping any topping back on to the cake. Repeat with second layer.

6 To freeze: wrap separately and freeze up to 1 month.

TO SERVE

Unwrap one layer, place on a plate and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, until skewer can be easily inserted, rotating half turn once. Stand 5 minutes. Repeat with other layer, but stand on absorbent paper for microwaving. Stand, then place on first layer, topping uppermost.

Topsy-turvy syrup cake

8 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

Thawing time: 6 mins

Standing after thawing: 5 mins

TOPPING

50g / 2oz brown sugar
75g / 3oz* maple syrup
50g / 2oz chopped nuts

BASE

175g / 6oz plain flour, sifted
50g / 2oz caster sugar
50g / 2oz butter, softened
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
2 eggs
15ml / 1tbls maple syrup

MAKES 8-10 SLICES

1 Combine all the topping ingredients in a 20cm / 8in cake dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes. Mix well.

2 Place all the ingredients for the base in a bowl and beat for 2-3 minutes until smooth and creamy. Spoon the mixture over the topping in the cake dish. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, rotating dish half a turn once.

3 Increase power to 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until an inserted skewer comes out clean.

4 Let stand for 2-3 minutes before turning out on to a wire rack. Leave to cool completely.

5 To freeze: wrap in freezer tissue or cling film, then over-wrap in foil. Seal, label and freeze for no longer than 1 month.

TO SERVE

Unwrap, place on a plate and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 6 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
3 Australian tablespoons

Topsy-turvy Syrup Cake

How to freeze large cakes

Open-freeze *plainly iced cakes until icing is firm when pressed before wrapping to avoid spoiling frosting.*

Wrap *securely in cling film then overwrap with foil. Place in top of freezer with nothing placed on top.*

Un-iced *cakes must be wrapped in cling film as soon as cool to prevent drying out. Overwrap in foil.*

Midweek supper for 4

Give a new look to a classic 'meat and three vegetables' theme with this handy turkey roast, served up with three colourful vegetable combinations; it's quick, clean and simple by microwave.

Boned turkey roasts are a good-value, no-waste way to serve up a solid, meaty meal — and they're simple to carve and economical, too.

The microwave makes quick work of these boneless joints, cooking them speedily and evenly without drying. The sharp-sweet cranberry sauce and marmalade baste keeps the joint moist during cooking and provides a tangy sauce which can be served hot with the finished dish.

Vegetables cook so well by microwave, and it's easy to create colourful mixtures with complementing flavours and textures. When microwaving vegetables of different textures together, start with the harder, thicker of the two and then add the second when the first is almost tender. Remember that some vegetables, such as tomatoes, scarcely need cooking, merely heating, to be ready to serve, so these can be stirred in

with cooked vegetables.

Individual crème caramels cook more evenly than a large single dessert and are more attractive to serve for entertaining. Make sure that the egg mixture never boils, or it will scramble and curdle. Use 50% (Medium) power and check frequently to see that it does not overheat. Serve the crème caramels on their own, with fresh fruit such as strawberries or raspberries, or with a fruit compote (see Part 1, page 8).

ALAN DUNN

MENU

Cranberry Turkey Roast
A juicy, easy-carve roast in a tangy baste

Cauliflower with Carrots
Crunchy florets and strips combined

Courgette Tomato Medley
A delicious Italian partnership

Potato with Onion
A buttery blend of sharp and mild flavours

Crème Caramels
Lightly set custard in bitter-sweet caramel

Assorted Fresh Fruit
An accompaniment for crème caramels

SERVES 4

Cranberry turkey roast

19 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

576g / 1¼lb turkey breast roast
175g / 6oz cranberry sauce
30ml / 2tbls marmalade
lettuce leaves to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Remove the outer wrapper from the turkey roast. Place the joint in a shallow dish and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 7 minutes. Take off inner wrapping and turn the joint.

2 Place the cranberry sauce and marmalade in a small bowl, mix well and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Spread half evenly over the turkey roast.

3 Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for a further 10 minutes. Cover with foil and allow to stand for 10 minutes. Arrange on a bed of lettuce. Serve with the rest of the sauce handed separately.

Countdown

In the morning
Prepare all the vegetables for the mixtures and refrigerate them separately in polythene bags.

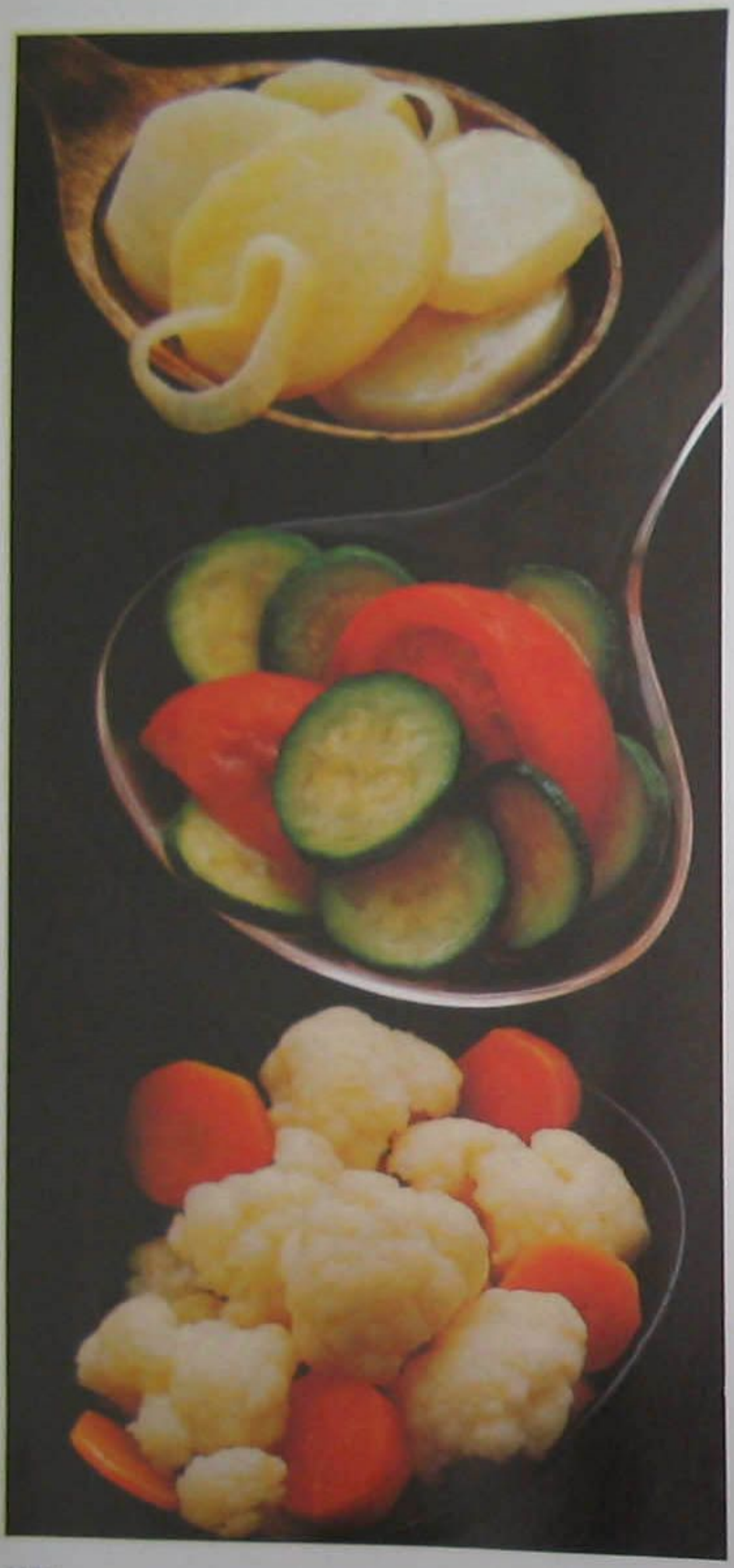
Microwave the Crème Caramels, allow to cool, then chill.

An hour before the meal
Take the vegetables from the refrigerator so that they can come to room temperature.

Microwave the turkey roast and leave to stand, keeping it warm by wrapping it in foil, for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, microwave the Potato with Onion and Cauliflower with Carrots. While they are standing, microwave the Courgette Tomato Medley. Turn out the Crème Caramels and return to the refrigerator. Serve the roast and vegetables hot, passing the remaining baste in a separate serving dish as a sauce.

Microtips

The remainder of the cranberry and marmalade sauce may become cold while the turkey roast is still cooking. Microwave it at 100% (High) for about 30 seconds, or until hot. Make sure the sauceboat has no metal trim. If it has, microwave in a bowl and transfer to sauceboat.



Potato with onion

10 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

550g / 1¼lb potatoes, sliced in 6mm / ¼in rounds
25g / 1oz butter
1 onion, cut in 6mm / ¼in slices and separated into rings
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the potatoes in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole, add the butter and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes, stirring twice to rearrange the slices.
2 Stir in the sliced onion and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes; season to taste. Keep covered and stand for 3 minutes.

Courgette tomato medley

5 mins

Standing time: none

The tomatoes in this medley scarcely need cooking, just heating, to serve.

4 courgettes, (about 225g / 8oz) cut in 6mm / ¼in slices
25g / 1oz butter
4 tomatoes, cut in wedges
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the courgettes in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole with the butter. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
2 Stir in the tomato wedges, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 2-3 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Potato with Onion, Courgette Tomato Medley, Cauliflower with Carrots

Microtips

Always season vegetables after cooking, as the salt can toughen them if it is added before microwaving.

PETER REILLY

Crème Caramels with fresh fruit

Cauliflower with carrots

8 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

1 cauliflower, weighing about 275g / 10oz, cut in florets
60ml / 4tbls water
2 large carrots, cut in 6mm / ¼in slices
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the cauliflower in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole and add the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring the pieces once to ensure even cooking.
2 Mix carrots into cauliflower and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 5 minutes, until vegetables are just tender but still crisp, stirring once during the cooking time.
3 Allow to stand for 3 minutes, then drain thoroughly and season to taste with salt and pepper. Place in a heated serving dish and leave covered until served.

Crème caramels

13½ mins

Standing time: none

When turning out the crème caramels, dip the bases into a bowl of boiling water until just hot to the touch. This will loosen the caramel layer.

100g / 4oz caster sugar
75ml / 3fl oz cold water
15ml / 1tbls boiling water
3 large eggs
150ml / ¼pt double cream
150ml / ¼pt milk
few drops of vanilla flavouring

SERVES 4

1 Place 75g / 3oz of the sugar in a large, heatproof bowl with the cold water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, then stir to dissolve the sugar. Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 6-10 minutes, or until the mixture turns a golden brown colour.
2 Stir in the boiling water and set aside to cool slightly. Divide between four individual ramekin dishes.
3 Beat the eggs, sugar, cream, milk and flavouring together lightly, then strain into the ramekins.
4 Arrange the filled dishes in a circle in the cooker and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4½-7 minutes, or until the mixture is just starting to set in the centre, giving the dishes a quarter turn every 2-3 minutes.
5 Remove the dishes from the cooker and allow to cool. Keep in the refrigerator until firm and set.
6 To serve, turn out on to a serving dish, letting the caramel sauce run around the desserts.

Cook's notes

Use a bowl which will withstand very high temperatures for heating the sugar. It should be deep enough to allow enough room for the syrup to expand without boiling over on to the cooker floor.

Microwaving celery

Celery adds crunch to many dishes and is delicious simply served in a sauce as a salad entrée. Make the most of its fresh flavour and try cooking it by microwave.

Celery is an extremely handy vegetable as it is available all year round and is very versatile. It adds a rich, savoury flavour to stews, soups and stir-frys, and complements the colour and taste of many different vegetables.

The whole celery stalk is edible, including the leaves, which are delicious for flavouring salads, soups, casseroles and sauces. Trim off the base and separate the stalks. Wash in cold water before using, then remove any bruised parts and peel away the strings from the outer stalks. Celery hearts are found at the core of the celery head. These can sometimes be bought ready-prepared, or cut away from a whole head.

Cooked in the microwave, celery retains its crunchy texture and healthy minerals. Just add 30ml / 2tbls water to a head of celery and follow the steps opposite. You will find braising time is greatly reduced with the microwave. In addition, when combined with meat and other vegetables, the flavour of celery is greatly enhanced with microwave cooking.

Greek-style Celery

RAY DUNN

Greek-style celery

11½ mins

Standing time: none

4 celery hearts, halved lengthways
30ml / 2tbls water

DRESSING
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
45ml / 3tbls dry white wine
125ml / 4fl oz water
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp ground coriander
5 black or green stuffed olives, halved
salt and pepper
chopped parsley or coriander, to decorate

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the dressing ingredients except the chopped parsley in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until onion is tender and liquid is slightly reduced.
2 Place the celery hearts and water in a dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes until just tender, turning once. Drain.
3 Pour the dressing over the celery, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until tender. Allow to cool, then chill until ready to serve. Sprinkle with coriander or parsley before serving.

Beef and celery stew

50 mins

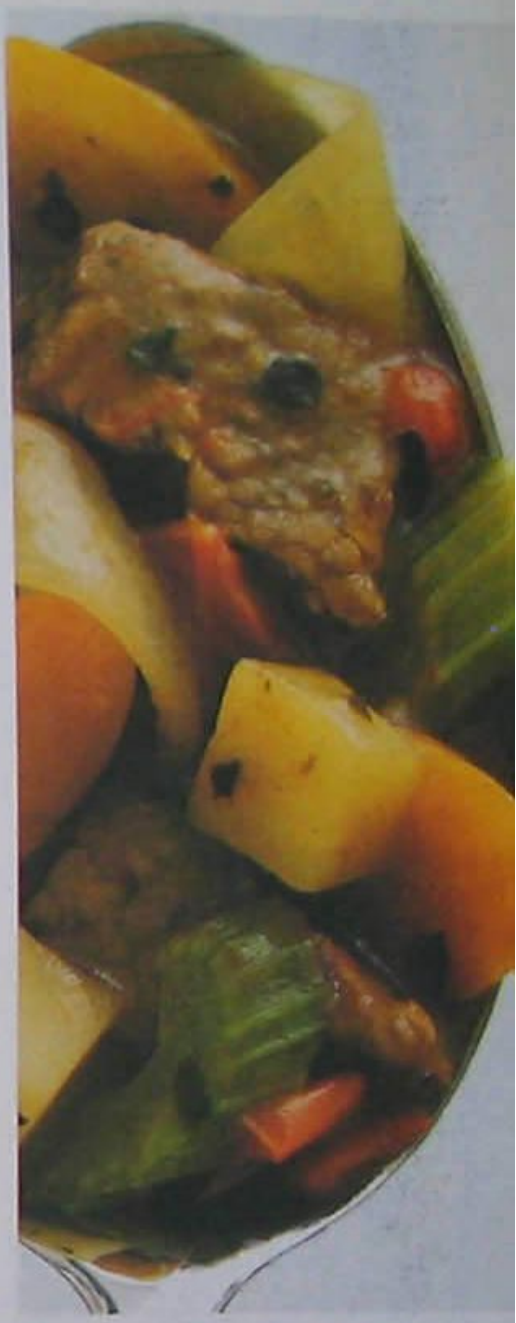
Standing time: 10 mins

This stew has an extra special flavour with the pale ale. Serve with brown rice or crusty wholemeal bread.

15ml / 3tsp cornflour
45ml / 3tbls water
275ml / ½pt can pale ale
450g / 1lb braising or stewing steak, cut into 2.5cm / 1in chunks
1 potato, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
1 onion, cut into 8 wedges
3 celery stalks, sliced
3 carrots, sliced
2 tomatoes, chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried marjoram
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 In a large casserole, blend the cornflour with the water. Add the pale ale, then stir in all the remaining ingredients until well combined; cover.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 40-45 minutes or until the meat is fork tender, stirring once or twice during cooking. Let stand, covered, for 10 minutes before serving.



Beef and Celery Stew

How to microwave sliced celery

Slice *a head of celery or 9 large celery stalks into 6mm / ¼in pieces. Place in a shallow, 23cm / 9in round dish.*

Add *30ml / 2tbls water or, for more flavour, use 25g / 1oz butter, cut into pieces. Cover with vented cling film.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until fork tender, stirring once. Let stand, covered, for 3 minutes.*

Beef and celery pilaff

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700g / 1½lb lean minced beef
225g / 8oz carrots, thinly sliced
3 celery stalks, thinly sliced
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
575ml / 1pt boiling water
225g / 8oz long grain rice
55g / 2oz packet onion soup mix
1 bay leaf

SERVES 4-6

1 Mix the beef, vegetables and thyme in a casserole; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes until beef is browned; stir twice.
2 Add remaining ingredients and microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 14-16 minutes until rice is tender, stirring twice; remove bay leaf. Stand, for 5 minutes.

Glazed celery and mushrooms

15½ mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
6 celery stalks, cut into 12mm / ½in diagonal slices
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
1 small onion, chopped
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
150ml / ¼pt water
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
¼ vegetable or chicken stock cube, crumbled
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
salt and pepper
1 bay leaf (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions.
2 Add oil, then stir in celery, mushrooms and onion. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.
3 Whisk the lemon juice, water and cornflour together until smooth. Stir in the crumbled stock cube, herbs, seasoning to taste and bay leaf, if using. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes, or until boiling, stirring once.
4 Add to the celery mixture, stir well, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until the celery is tender-crisp, stirring once during cooking. Discard the bay leaf and serve.

Above: *Glazed Celery and Mushrooms*
Left: *Beef and Celery Pilaff*

Cook's notes

This vegetable accompaniment is also delicious served chilled. It keeps in the refrigerator for up to 2 days, so can be prepared well in advance. Remove 10 minutes before serving.

Microtips

Remember to check your microwave manufacturer's handbook when using a browning dish. Some recommend placing the dish on an upturned, heatproof glass plate or saucer or special microwave trivet. Never heat the dish for longer than the recommended time as this may damage the glass turntable or the glass plate cooker base.

Buttery braised vegetables

13 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 potatoes, peeled and quartered
3 carrots, halved lengthways, then cut into 5cm / 2in lengths
2 celery stalks, cut into 7.5cm / 3in lengths
45ml / 3tbls water
100g / 4oz butter

SERVES 4

1 Combine the potatoes, carrots, celery and water in a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, or until fork tender, stirring after half the time. Let stand for 5 minutes.
2 Meanwhile, prepare the browned butter. Place the butter in a large, heat-resistant glass bowl or measuring jug or microwave-safe (up to 200°C / 400°F) dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Skim off all the foam and stir the butter. Microwave the butter for a further 2 minutes, or until the butter is a deep golden brown.
3 Drain the vegetables and pour or spoon over the browned butter, leaving behind the sediment.

Stuffed celery

1 min

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls assorted dried vegetable flakes
2.5ml / ½tsp chopped spring onion
45ml / 3tbls water
50g / 2oz full-fat soft cheese
salt and pepper
4 large celery stalks, trimmed

MAKES 20 PIECES

Above: *Buttery Braised Vegetables*
Below: *Stuffed Celery*

1 Combine vegetable flakes, onion and water in a measuring jug. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds, or until vegetable flakes are soft; drain.
2 Place cheese in a small bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-30 seconds until softened. Season with salt and pepper and stir in drained vegetable flakes.
3 Stuff the celery with the cheese mixture and cut each stalk into five pieces.

Oriental Pork and Celery

Oriental pork and celery

19 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz fresh or drained canned beansprouts
225g / 8oz boneless shoulder of pork steaks, or pork loin
2-3 celery stalks, cut into 6mm / ¼in slices
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
2 spring onions, sliced diagonally
1 small red pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
45ml / 3tbls white wine or water
pepper

SERVES 2

1 If using fresh beansprouts, soak them in cold water for 10 minutes, then drain thoroughly.

2 Cut the pork into 5cm / 2in strips. In a casserole combine the pork strips, beansprouts, celery, mushrooms, spring onions and red pepper. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-16 minutes, until the meat is no longer pink and the vegetables are tender, stirring three times.

3 Place the cornflour in a measuring jug and blend with the soy sauce and wine; season with pepper. Drain the liquid from the meat and vegetables into the jug. Cover the pork and vegetables and set aside.

4 Add extra water if necessary to make the liquid up to 200ml / 7fl oz. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, stirring after each minute, or until thickened. Pour over the meat and vegetables. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-2½ minutes. Serve over Chinese noodles.

Freezer notes

To make yourself two meals from this Oriental pork and celery, eat half then freeze the other when completely cold for up to 2 weeks. To thaw and serve: microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 7-8 minutes or until heated, stirring twice to break apart. Serve immediately with noodles or rice.

Pot roasting

Slow cooking dishes adapt very well to microwave cooking; a pot roast can be microwaved remarkably quickly for a deliciously succulent and tasty meal.

Pot roasting is the traditional name given to braising and summons up images of hot nourishing meals served with wholesome winter vegetables. By using a lower setting, large joints of beef tenderize beautifully in the microwave, yet still cook in under an hour — far faster than the slow-cooking method of conventional pot roasting.

The popularity and joy of pot roasting is that cheaper — yet tasty — cuts of meat can be used. The cuts of beef best suited to pot roasting are the firm ones from the leg, shoulder or neck. Chuck and blade are two popular names of shoulder cuts, while silverside, topside or top rump are cuts from the upper leg. However, your butcher may call such cuts by

Pot Roast with Courgettes

MARTIN BRIGDALE

different names. In fact, it is always worth asking him to recommend a suitable braising joint,* mentioning how many people you wish to serve.

Before microwaving a pot roast joint, prick the meat all over with a fork or sharp knife. This allows the flavour of the stock to penetrate and helps tenderize the meat. Marinating will also tenderize even the toughest joint of meat and adds a rich and pleasant melt-in-the-mouth flavour.

When pot roasting with vegetables, add these towards the end of cooking to prevent them overcooking and losing their flavour and goodness. Stand meat for 20-30 minutes to complete cooking and further tenderize the joint.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use boneless blade, topside or yearling silverside.

Cook's notes

You will find that most joints of beef, especially the cheaper cuts, shrink a little during cooking when pot roasting. For this reason, recipes suggest using rather larger weights of meat than usually recommended.

Always serve meat with its juices which will be full of flavour.

Pot roast with courgettes

50 mins

Standing time: 20-30 mins

1.1kg / 2½lb silverside, chuck or blade fillet of beef*
30ml / 2tbls Worcestershire sauce
1 × 295g / 10.4oz can condensed cream of mushroom soup
salt and pepper
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 onion, chopped
450g / 1lb courgettes, sliced into 4cm / 1½in sticks

SERVES 6

1 Weigh joint and calculate cooking time, allowing 20-22

Sweet and Sour Pot Roast

minutes per 450g / 1lb. Pierce meat with carving fork and brush evenly with half the Worcestershire sauce.
2 Place half the mushroom soup in a large casserole. Put the meat on top, together with remaining soup and Worcestershire sauce, seasoning, garlic and onion.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes; reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for remaining calculated time, turning meat twice. Ten minutes before end of cooking stir sauce and add courgettes.
4 Allow meat to stand for 20-30 minutes, then place on serving plate with sauce poured around. Serve sliced with jacket potatoes.

Sweet and sour pot roast

27 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

900g / 2lb silverside*
1 onion
4 carrots
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls water
2.5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
1.5ml / ¼tsp spicy sauce
salt and pepper

MARINADE
225ml / 8fl oz white wine vinegar
275ml / ½pt water
5 black peppercorns
pinch of ground cloves
2 large pinches of ground ginger
3 bay leaves
1 large garlic clove, crushed
10ml / 2tsp caraway seeds

SERVES 6

Microtips

Marinating meat will tenderize a joint, which means that the microwaving times are reduced. Remember to check the weight of the meat before placing in marinade. It soaks up much of the marinating liquid and will weigh quite a lot more afterwards.

How to microwave Sweet and sour pot roast

Trim *surplus fat or gristle from meat, weigh joint and calculate cooking time, allowing 12-14 minutes per 450g / 1lb (see Microtips, above). Place all marinade ingredients in a large bowl. Cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes until warm.*

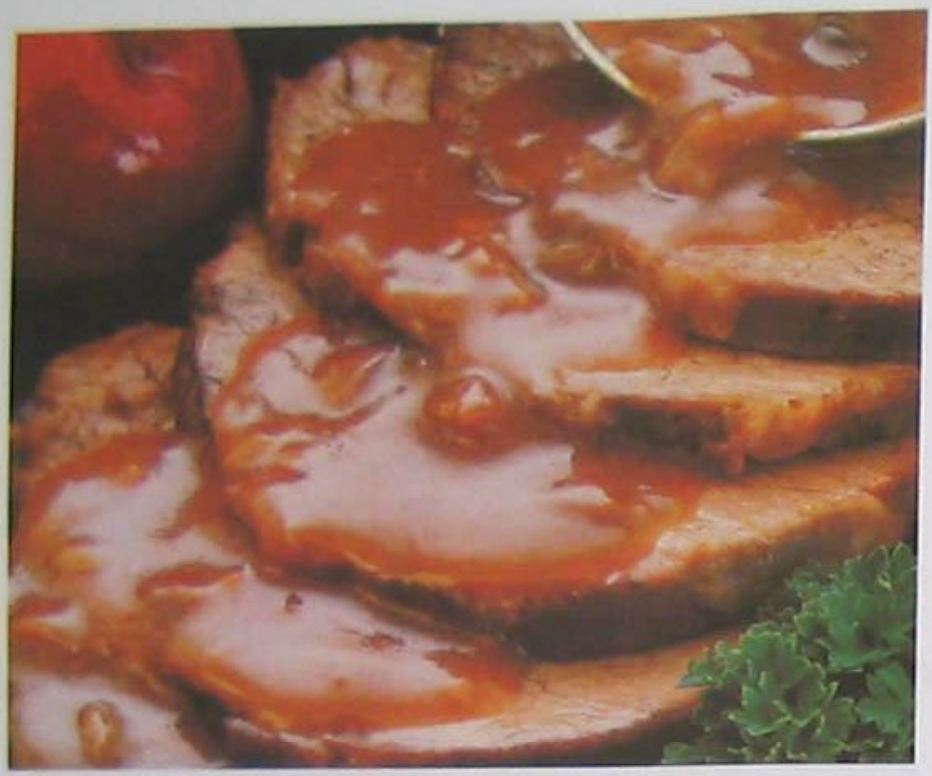
Stir *the marinade gently. Place the meat in a large plastic bag and add the marinade. Tie the bag loosely, place in a large dish and refrigerate for 10-12 hours or overnight. After marinating, remove meat and reserve. Strain marinade and reserve 150ml / ¼pt of liquid, discarding remainder.*

Thinly *slice the onion and the carrots. Place the meat in a large 2.3l. / 4pt casserole and arrange onion and carrot on top. Add the reserved marinade and cover with a tight fitting lid. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes in order to bring the marinade to the boil.*

Reduce *power setting to 50% (Medium). Microwave for remainder of calculated time, turning the meat over halfway through cooking. Once cooked, remove meat and vegetables from casserole and arrange on serving plate. Cover tightly with foil and allow to stand for 10 minutes.*

Pour *275ml / ½pt of stock from casserole into a jug. Discard remaining stock, or refrigerate and use later in a meaty soup. Blend cornflour and water in a large bowl, then gradually add reserved stock, together with ginger and spicy sauce. Stir thoroughly until smooth and free of lumps.*

Microwave *the sauce at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until hot and slightly thickened, stirring once or twice during cooking. Season with a little salt and pepper. Slice meat thickly then pour the sauce over meat and vegetables. Serve immediately with new potatoes and a green vegetable.*



Creamy celery pot roast

50 mins

Standing time: 20-30 mins

1.1kg / 2½lb blade fillet, silverside or topside of beef*
295g / 10.4oz can condensed cream of celery soup
½ × 55g / 1¾oz packet French onion soup mix

SERVES 6-8

Cook's notes

Before microwaving pot roast, trim away excess fat from meat. Brush with a little Worcestershire or soy sauce to add colour as well as extra flavour.

How to microwave Creamy celery pot roast

Weigh *joint and calculate cooking time, allowing 20-22 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Pierce the meat all over with a carving knife or sharp knife.*

Spread *half the celery soup over the bottom of a large microwave roasting bag, placed inside a large casserole. Place joint on top of the soup.*

Sprinkle *the dried onion soup over the meat, then add the remaining celery soup, making sure that it completely coats the meat.*

Gather *the ends of the bag together and tie loosely with a rubber band or any non-metallic tag, leaving sufficient space for steam to escape.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for remaining calculated time, turning meat once.*

Stand *meat in its bag for 20-30 minutes. Transfer to a serving dish; pour the sauce over the meat. Serve sliced, with a selection of vegetables.*

Hot Pot Roast

Hot pot roast

55 mins

Standing time: 20-30 mins

1.1kg / 2½lb silverside or topside*
330ml / 11½fl oz can lager
salt and pepper
450g / 1lb potatoes, cut into 5cm / 2in cubes
1 onion, cut into wedges
2 celery stalks, thickly sliced
2 carrots, cut into large pieces
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
5ml / 1tsp sugar
15ml / 1tbls water

SERVES 6

1 Weigh the joint and calculate cooking time, allowing 20-22 minutes per 450g / 1lb.
2 Pierce meat all over with a carving fork or sharp knife and place in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Add half the lager and seasoning, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
3 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and cook for remaining calculated time, turning meat two or three times. Halfway through cooking, add the prepared vegetables and remaining lager.
4 Place meat and vegetables on serving plate and stand, covered, for 20-30 minutes.
5 Meanwhile, make gravy. Blend the cornflour, tomato purée and sugar with the water and stir into the casserole with the meat juices.
6 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring two or three times, or until thickened. Adjust seasoning to taste, then spoon a little gravy over meat and vegetables; serve the rest separately.

Stuffed vegetables

Stuffed vegetables make excellent lunch or supper-time dishes, dinner party starters or buffet snacks. They taste as good as they look when cooked by microwave.

Many vegetables are ideal for stuffing. Their centres can be simply hollowed out (see steps), leaving a natural shell for filling with combinations of delicious savoury ingredients. The stuffed vegetables cook quickly in the microwave, leaving softened shells and moist fillings.

Artichokes, aubergines, courgettes, marrow, onions, sweet peppers and tomatoes are especially popular for stuffing as they are well-shaped and a good size. Cabbage leaves can be stuffed, but a whole cabbage is especially attractive, particularly when served with a tomato sauce for extra colour (see recipe, page 1145). Choose even-sized vegetables so they will all be ready at the same time. When hollowing out the centre of a vegetable to make a shell, take care not to puncture the skin, otherwise the juices will run out during cooking and the finished dish will not be as moist as

it should be.

Vegetables with hard outer shells or centres, such as squash or onions, may need a short spell in the microwave to soften them and ease cutting and scooping out the flesh. The flesh is usually added to the stuffing ingredients, provided it does not contain seeds or pith.

Cooked rice makes a substantial base for stuffings. Because it is bland, it combines well with other ingredients. Breadcrumbs are a good alternative. A topping of grated or sliced cheese gives a colourful finish to a dish.

Courgette Boats

Courgette boats

5 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

2 courgettes

STUFFING

50g / 2oz long-grain rice, cooked
½ onion, chopped
½ green pepper, chopped
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
salt
1 small tomato, skinned, seeded and chopped

SERVES 4

1 Cut the courgettes in half lengthways. Scrape out the pulp, leaving a 6mm / ¼in shell. Chop the pulp and combine with the rice, onion, green pepper, basil and salt.

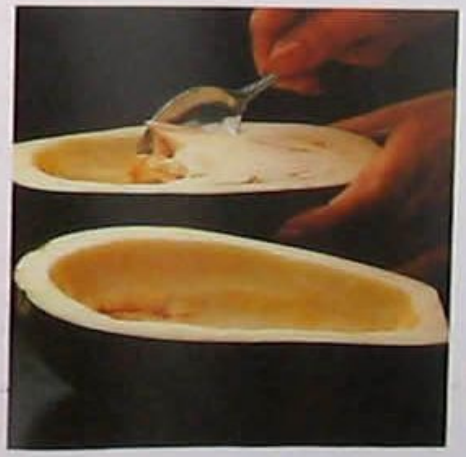
2 Place the courgette shells in a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in dish. Mound quarter of the vegetable mixture into each shell. Top with the chopped tomato.

3 Cover with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until the shells are tender, rotating dish half turn once. Let stand for 2-3 minutes. Serve with Speedy Tomato Sauce (page 1144), if liked.

How to prepare vegetables for stuffing

Slice *off the stalk end from sweet peppers, then scoop out the white seeds and pith from the centre. Use wooden cocktail sticks to hold peppers upright during microwaving, if necessary.*

Microwave *trimmed, peeled onions for half cooking time before hollowing out centres — the centres can be easily removed with a spoon when the onions are cool enough to handle.*



Halve *trimmed courgettes or aubergines lengthways. Use a spoon to hollow out centre, leaving a 12mm / ½in shell. Courgettes can also be cut into chunky slices for stuffing.*

Microwave *whole squash for half the cooking time to soften skin and flesh and ease cutting. Cut in half, then use a spoon to scrape out the seeds and membrane, and discard.*

Beefy peppers

16 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

These peppers make an excellent lunch or supper dish — serve them with a crisp lettuce, grated carrot and celery salad.

4 large green or red peppers

STUFFING
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 small onion, chopped
1 tomato, skinned and chopped
75g / 3oz long-grain rice, cooked
5ml / 1tsp horseradish relish
salt and pepper
1 slice of cheese, cut into eight thin strips

SERVES 4

Beefy Peppers

1 Slice the tops from the peppers and remove the seeds and white pith without piercing the shells.
2 Crumble the beef into a large bowl. Mix in the onion, tomato, rice, horseradish and seasoning. Fill the peppers with the mixture. Stand them on a roasting rack or in a dish, supporting them with wooden cocktail sticks if necessary (see Cook's notes, right).
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-17 minutes or until the shells are just tender when pressed at the base with a knife, rearranging them two or three times during cooking.
4 Place two cheese strips on top of each pepper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until the cheese melts. Let stand for 2-3 minutes before serving.

Speedy tomato sauce

4½ mins

Standing time: none

This sauce is particularly good with meat-stuffed vegetables. If stuffing sweet peppers, save the tops to use in the sauce.

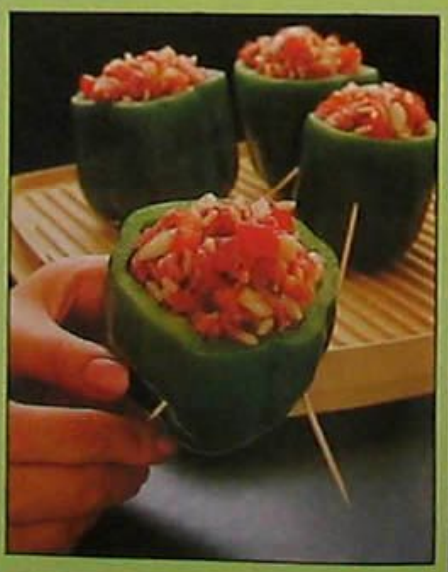
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped onion
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped green or red pepper
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
142g / 5oz can tomato paste
5ml / 1tsp sugar
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
large pinch of dried basil
large pinch of garlic powder
300ml / 10fl oz tomato juice
salt and pepper

MAKES 275ml / ½pt

1 Put the onion, pepper and butter in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes.
2 Mix in the remaining ingredients. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until bubbling hot, stirring once.

Cook's notes

Insert a few wooden cocktail sticks in the base of each stuffed pepper so that it stands upright, if needed. Remember to remove the sticks before serving, but wait until the last moment or the juices will escape through the pierced skin.



Stuffed cabbage

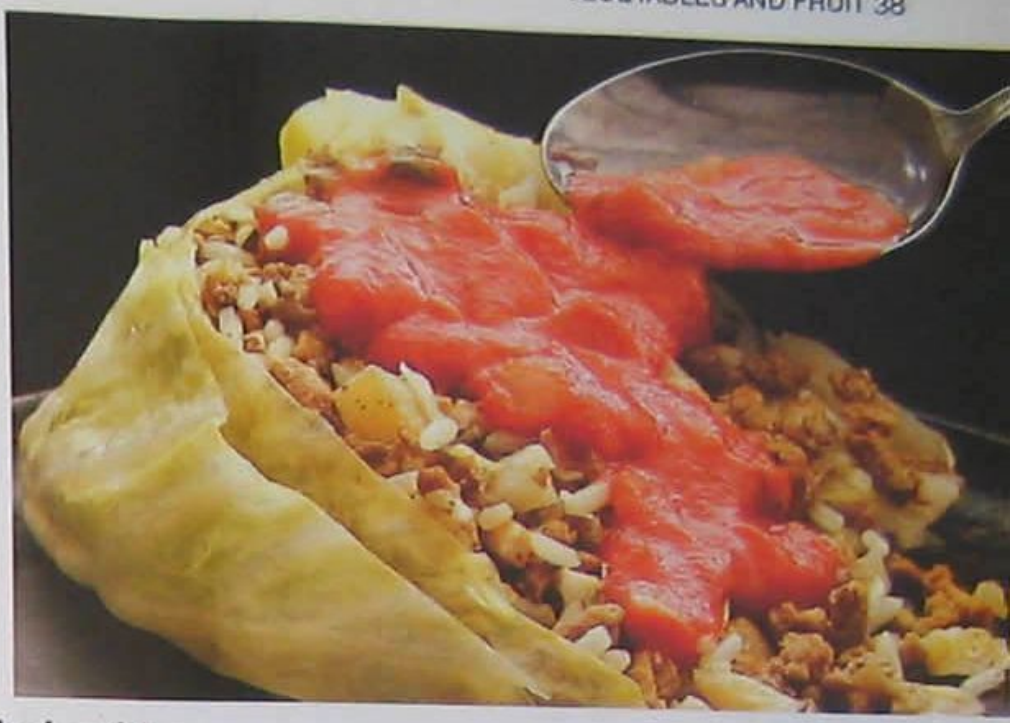
24 mins

Standing time: none

1 large white or green cabbage
150ml / ¼pt water

STUFFING
225g / 8oz lean minced beef
225g / 8oz lean minced pork
1 cooking apple, chopped
1 onion, chopped
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
175g / 6oz cooked rice
1 egg, beaten
10ml / 2tsp Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground allspice

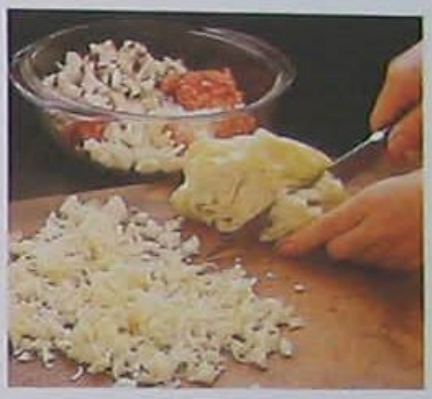
SERVES 6



How to microwave Stuffed cabbage

Place *the cabbage and water in a deep casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes until the outer leaves are supple. Drain and leave to cool.*

Position *the cooled cabbage on two crossed sheets of cling film. Carefully peel back outer leaves. Cut out the centre heart leaving the outer leaves attached to the stem.*



Chop *the centre leaves finely with a sharp knife, discarding any tough stalk. Put into a large casserole with the minced beef and pork, the chopped apple and onion.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes until the meat is no longer pink, stirring once. Mix in remaining stuffing ingredients. Place the cabbage leaves on the cling film in a deep bowl.*

Press *the meat mixture into the centre of the prepared cabbage leaves. Cover it with one or two leaves. Press remaining mixture round the edges, folding remaining leaves over top.*

Secure *the cling film over the cabbage. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes or until the cabbage is soft, turning twice; unwrap. Serve with Speedy Tomato Sauce (see opposite).*

Piquant tomatoes

2 mins

Standing time: none

These spicy tomatoes make a moreish starter, or tasty nibble with pre-dinner drinks. Try using half green and half red pepper.

225g / 8oz curd cheese
½ onion, grated
1 egg yolk
5ml / 1tsp horseradish sauce
1 garlic clove, crushed
pepper
1 small green or red pepper, seeded and finely chopped
700g / 1½lb small, firm tomatoes

SERVES 6

1 Place the curd cheese in a large casserole together with the onion, egg yolk, horseradish sauce, crushed garlic and pepper. Beat with an electric mixer at medium speed for 1 minute until well blended and fluffy. Stir in the chopped pepper with a spoon.

2 Slice off the tomato tops. Use a teaspoon to scoop out the seeds. Fill each tomato with the cheese mixture. Arrange half the tomatoes in a ring on a plate lined with absorbent paper, placing two or three in the centre. Arrange remainder on a second plate.

3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes, or until just warmed through, rotating the plate a quarter turn every 30 seconds. Repeat with the remaining plate.

Cook's notes

Serve Piquant Tomatoes straight from the cooker, while still warm and puffy. The tomatoes can be filled and kept in the refrigerator for up to four hours. To serve, microwave each plate in turn at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes.

Sausage-stuffed aubergine

17 mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

350g / 12oz pork sausagemeat
1 large aubergine
1 onion, chopped
50g / 2oz mushrooms, chopped
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried basil
salt and pepper
75ml / 3fl oz water
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Break up the sausagemeat into a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until no longer pink, stirring once. Break up the meat and drain on absorbent paper.

2 Cut the aubergine in half lengthways; trim off stalk. Scoop out the flesh, leaving a 6mm / ¼in shell. Chop the flesh roughly and place in the cleaned casserole with the onion. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the onion is transparent, stirring twice. Stir in the sausagemeat, mushrooms, breadcrumbs, Worcestershire sauce, basil and seasoning. Use the mixture to fill the aubergine shells.

3 Pour the water into a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in dish. Add the filled aubergine shells. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, or until shells are just soft, rearranging twice.

4 Sprinkle with cheese. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes until cheese has melted. Stand for 3-4 minutes. Cut in half and serve with a crisp salad.

Sausage-stuffed Aubergine

Crab-stuffed courgettes

6 mins

Standing time: none

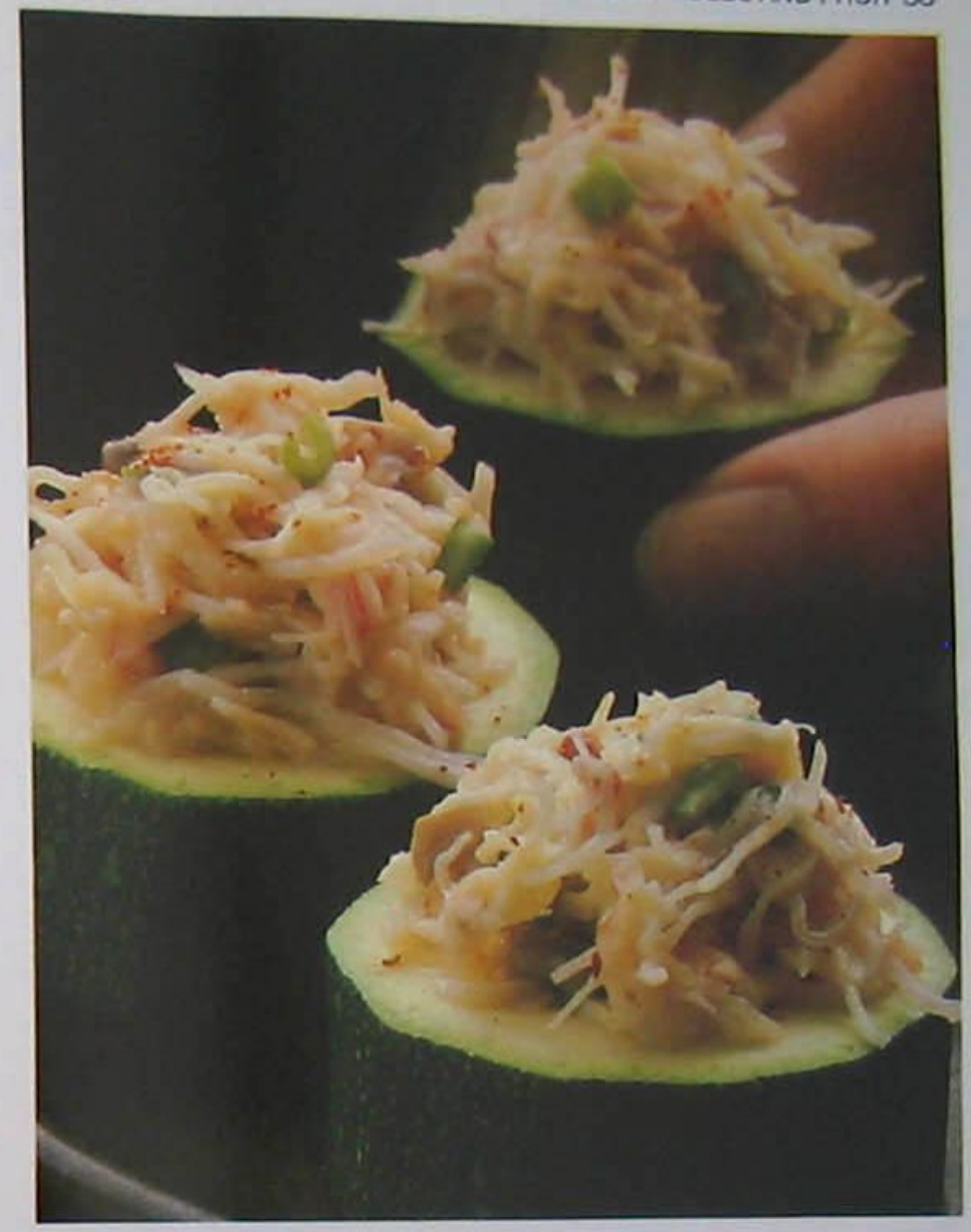
Serve warm or cold as a mouth-watering snack or as a starter for a dinner party, garnished with lettuce leaves.

50g / 2oz mushrooms, chopped
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
large pinch of paprika
75ml / 3fl oz creamy milk
6 small spring onions, chopped
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls dry sherry
170g / 6oz can crabmeat, drained well and flaked
700g / 1½lb small courgettes, cut into 2cm / ¾in slices

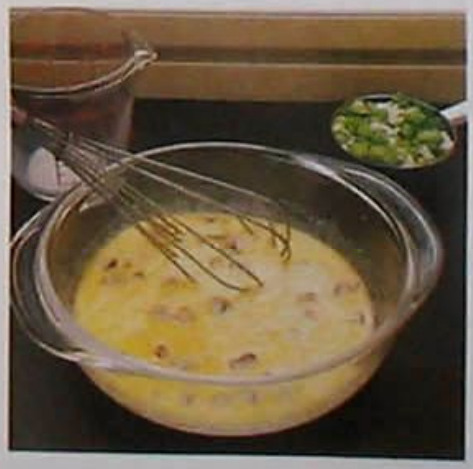
SERVES 6-8

Slimmer's notes

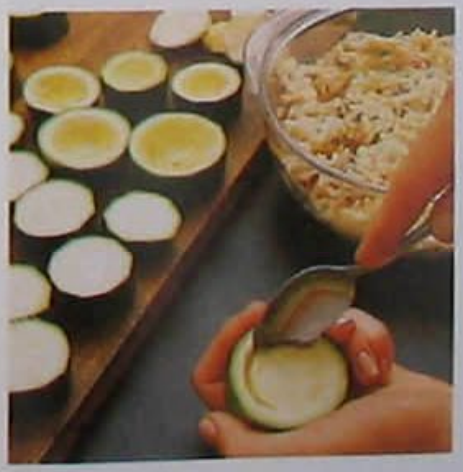
These succulent morsels make an excellent dinner party starter for the weight conscious. Just use 90ml / 6tbls skimmed milk for the creamy milk and omit the sherry. It serves six as a starter, allowing about four pieces each. This gives 85Cal / 355kJ per serving.



How to microwave Crab-stuffed courgettes



Place *the mushrooms and butter in a casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes until mushrooms are soft. Stir in flour and paprika. Blend in the milk, then mix in the onions, salt, pepper and sherry.*



Microwave *at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, whisking two or three times, or until thickened. Stir in crabmeat; set aside. Scoop out centre of each courgette slice with a small spoon, leaving a 3mm / ⅛in border at sides.*

Spoon *crab mixture into courgettes. Arrange on two plates lined with absorbent paper. Sprinkle with paprika. Microwave one plate at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2 minutes, rotating twice. Repeat with second plate.*

Microwaving fish fingers

No longer need fish fingers go hand-in-hand with chips and peas — you can serve this favourite standby in a host of unusual ways. They are quick and tasty cooked the microwave way.

RAY DUNS

Fish fingers are generally regarded as good, plain fare for children and are usually served with chips, peas and perhaps a little tomato ketchup. With the microwave, however, you can quickly transform fish fingers into a tasty and yet sophisticated dish for adults, which is healthy, inexpensive and nourishing.

No oil or fat is needed to cook fish fingers in the microwave, so they are less fatty than when conventionally fried. They retain all their juiciness too, and are crisp and delicious.

For best results, cook fish fingers on a microwave griddle. If you do not have one, a browning dish will do just as well, although the fish fingers may be less crisp.

Cooking times may vary depending on which brand of fish fingers you buy. Those made from whole cod cook faster than those made from minced cod or other white fish. Be careful not to overcook fish fingers, or they become rubbery and tough during the standing time.

Fish Finger Salad

Cook's notes

Remember that any leftover, cold fish fingers make a tasty filling for a lunch-box sandwich or roll.

Slimmer's notes

For a really low-calorie meal, make the dressing for Fish Finger Salad (opposite) with 60ml / 4tbls low-fat yoghurt instead of mayonnaise, and substitute lemon juice for the milk. This version of the salad gives 150Cal / 630kJ per serving and is just as delicious.

Fish finger salad

10 mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

8 fish fingers
100g / 4oz white cabbage, shredded
4 carrots, grated
2 celery stalks, chopped
2 red-skinned dessert apples, cored and chopped
50g / 2oz cucumber, chopped

GARNISH
tomato wedges and parsley sprigs

DRESSING
60ml / 4tbls mayonnaise
15ml / 1tbls milk
1 garlic clove, crushed
pinch of paprika

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the fish fingers (see the steps and chart below). Set aside, uncovered, until cold.
2 Meanwhile, make the dressing. Mix all the ingredients together and stir well. Put all the salad ingredients in a bowl, spoon over the dressing and toss thoroughly. Chill until ready to serve.
3 Arrange the chilled salad on a dish together with the cold fish fingers. Garnish with tomato and lemon slices.

VARIATION
Use red instead of white cabbage.

Microtips

A microwave griddle is a completely flat dish which is used in exactly the same way as a microwave browning dish. When cooking fish fingers, arrange them as close as possible to the edge of the griddle, so that they cook evenly, and press down firmly for maximum contact.

Sweet and sour fish fingers

14½ mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

450g / 1lb frozen Chinese-style stir-fry vegetables
15g / ½oz butter
8 fish fingers

SAUCE
10ml / 2tsp soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls honey

SERVES 4

1 Combine the frozen vegetables and butter in a casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.
2 Combine all the sauce ingredients in a small bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, until thickened, stirring halfway through. Pour the sauce over the vegetables, cover and set aside while you cook the fish fingers (see chart below).
3 Place fish fingers on vegetables. Serve with Chinese noodles.

VARIATION
Substitute sugar for the honey and vinegar for the lemon juice.

Fishburgers

10¾ mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

8 fish fingers
4 soft rolls or baps
30ml / 2tbls tartare sauce
4 thin slices Gouda cheese
2 tomatoes, sliced
60ml / 4tbls mustard* and cress
gherkins and olives, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the fish fingers as directed in the steps and chart. Cover loosely with foil; set aside.
2 Place the rolls on a dish lined with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, until warm.
3 Split the rolls and spread each with tartare sauce. Fill each with two fish fingers and top with a slice of cheese and the sliced tomatoes. Cover the buns with absorbent paper, and microwave for 1 minute, or until warm.
4 Divide the mustard and cress between the rolls and serve hot, garnished with gherkin fans and pimento-stuffed olives.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Leaf mustard.

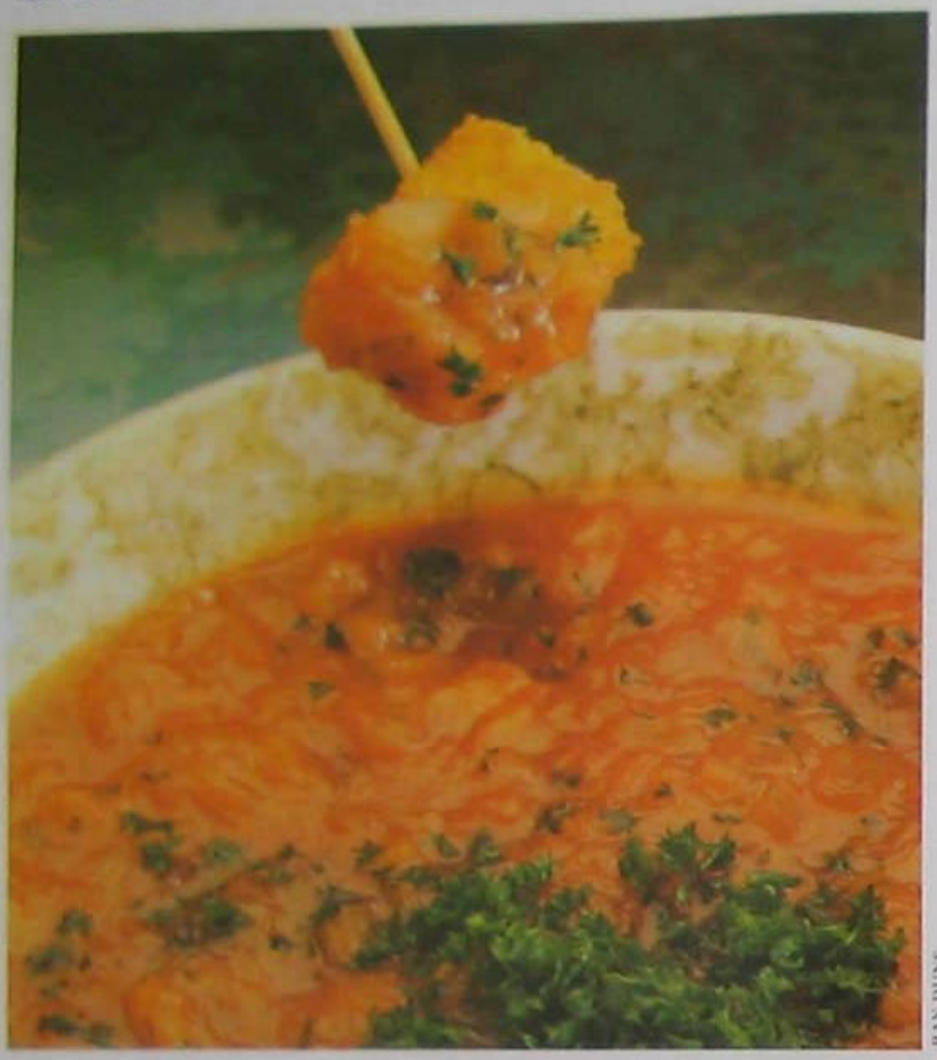
How to microwave fish fingers

Preheat *a microwave griddle at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, or according to maker's instructions. Add fish; press down well.*

Microwave *for the recommended time (see chart), turning the fish fingers over halfway through cooking. Leave to stand for 1-2 minutes before serving.*

Microwave times for fish fingers

QUANTITY	TIME AT 100% (HIGH)
2	1½ mins
4	2 mins
6	3 mins
8	4 mins



RAY DUNS

Zippy Dipped Fish Fingers

Zippy dipped fish fingers

17 mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

8 fish fingers

DIP
1 onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
376g / 13.3oz can crushed pineapple in syrup
10ml / 2tsp Worcestershire sauce
60ml / 4tbls tomato ketchup
15ml / 1tbls honey
5ml / 1tsp cornflour
5ml / 1tsp dry mustard
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 For the dip, put the onion and oil in a bowl, cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, until translucent. Stir in all the remaining ingredients, except the parsley. Cover and cook at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until slightly thickened. Stir to blend evenly.

2 Stir in the parsley, cover and set aside while you cook the fish fingers according to the steps and chart (page 1149).

3 Serve the fish fingers whole, or halved or quartered. Sprinkle the chopped parsley over the dip and use cocktail sticks or forks to dip the fish fingers into the prepared sauce.

Cook's notes

This recipe makes a delicious party dish, which both children and adults will enjoy, served with a variety of dips, such as mayonnaise and spicy tomato chutney. For a chunkier dip, add a little chopped celery and green pepper to the onion and oil in step 1 — these will remain crisp.

Fish finger risotto

20 mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

2 × 277g / 10oz cans 3-minute rice, or 500g / 18oz cooked rice
salt to taste
75ml / 5tbls water
15g / ½oz butter
2 celery stalks, chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 red pepper, cored, seeded and chopped
100g / 4oz frozen peas
100g / 4oz cooked ham, cut into strips
8 fish fingers

SERVES 4

1 Combine the canned rice, salt, water, butter, celery, onion, garlic and red pepper in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once. If using cooked rice, omit the water.

2 Stir in the frozen peas, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking.

3 Stir in the ham, cover the casserole and set aside while you cook the fish fingers according to the steps and chart (page 1149).

4 Transfer the risotto to a serving dish and surround it with the fish fingers, cut in half, if liked. Garnish with lemon slices and sprigs of parsley if liked.

VARIATIONS

If preferred, omit the ham and add 100g / 4oz peeled prawns instead, and substitute 50g / 2oz of the peas for 50g / 2oz frozen sweetcorn niblets.

Freezer notes

Prepare the risotto in advance, pack in a freezer/microwave container; cover and freeze for up to 1 month. To thaw: cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir well, then microwave for a further 2-3 minutes, until piping hot.

Fish finger kebabs

22 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

12 fish fingers
6 streaky bacon rashers, rinds removed, cut in half
8 baby onions
1 small red or green pepper, seeded and cut into 12 pieces
4 small mushrooms, halved

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the fish fingers at 30% (Defrost) for 2 minutes, then cut each in half. Wrap a piece of bacon around each piece.
2 Place the onions in a bowl, cover with boiling water and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes. Leave to stand in the water for 5 minutes, then cut in half.
3 Thread a piece of bacon-wrapped fish finger on to a wooden skewer, then a piece of pepper, half an onion and half a mushroom. Repeat, allowing three fish finger pieces per skewer, then assemble three more skewers.
4 Meanwhile heat a microwave griddle for 6 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Lay half the kebabs around the edge of griddle and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Turn over; microwave for 2 minutes.
5 Transfer to a dish and cover loosely with foil while you cook the remaining kebabs.
6 Wipe the griddle clean with absorbent paper and preheat again for 2 minutes. Microwave the remaining kebabs as before. Serve with boiled rice.

Fish finger kebabs for two: halve quantities. Preheat griddle. Microwave kebabs at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, turn and microwave for 1 minute more.

Microtips

A heated browning dish or griddle acts in much the same way as a hot frying pan: wiping it clean in step 6 makes sure that any traces of food do not brown and stick when microwaving remainder of kebabs.

Below: *Fish Finger Risotto*
Right: *Fish Finger Kebabs*

RAY DUNN

MARTIN BRIGDALE

STAR RECIPE

Beefburger 'n' bacon special

Surprise family and friends with these deliciously different bacon-stuffed burgers, served with tangy mushrooms and onions. Everyone will love this dish with a difference.

These juicy bacon-stuffed burgers look like ordinary hamburgers but inside each one is a surprise filling of crisply-cooked bacon, with a flavour that is beautifully balanced by the 'zingy' mushroom and onion accompaniment. Serve these deliciously different burgers with creamed potatoes and a crisp green salad, or simply prepare them and serve them like hamburgers with a difference — put them in wholemeal rolls and watch how quickly they disappear.

MARTIN BRIGDALE

If you like, you can prepare the burgers in advance. Wrap them in cling film and keep them in the refrigerator until ready to cook them. If you microwave them directly from chilled, allow a few seconds extra cooking time.

Microtips

When using a browning dish, always check with your microwave manufacturer's handbook. Never pre-heat the dish longer than the recommended time as this can damage the turntable or glass plate cooker base. Some manufacturers recommend placing the browning dish on an upturned heatproof plate or microwave trivet.

Beefburger 'n' bacon special

16 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

6 streaky bacon rashers
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
45ml / 3tbls fresh breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp garlic powder
salt and pepper
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced and separated into rings
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce

SERVES 4

VARIATION
Serve the burgers with a herby tomato sauce instead of the mushroom and onion topping; add 15ml / 1tbls tomato ketchup or sauce and a drop or two of Tabasco to the Worcestershire sauce.

If serving like a burger in a bun, provide a selection of different-flavoured relishes.

Freezer notes

The prepared burgers can be frozen uncooked, for up to 1 month. Open freeze until solid, then pack in a rigid container or polythene bag, separating them with freezer tissue.

To serve, microwave from frozen in the preheated browning dish at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes on each side. Test for doneness by piercing with a cocktail stick.

How to microwave Beefburger 'n' bacon special

Place *the bacon on several layers of absorbent paper. Cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, until almost crisp. Set aside.*

Preheat *a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to maker's instructions. Mix beef, breadcrumbs, parsley and garlic powder; season. Shape into 8 patties.*

Crumble *the bacon and place one quarter on the centre of each of half of the patties. Top with the remaining patties and press the edges firmly together to seal.*

Arrange *the burgers in the preheated browning dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, turn over and microwave for 1½ minutes more, until beef is still slightly pink.*

Transfer *the bacon-stuffed burgers to a serving plate. Cover them loosely with cling film and set aside while you cook the mushrooms and onions for the topping.*

Stir *remaining ingredients into drippings in browning dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until vegetables are tender; stir once. Spoon over burgers.*

Petits fours

Nothing beats a wickedly indulgent chocolate or candy to round off a meal. Microwaving makes it easy to produce petits fours — a sweet finale with a flourish.

Easy melting, smooth blending and speedy cleaning — all are microwave specialities. That's why these after-dinner goodies are so simple to make.

Do away with water baths and sticky saucepans — melt and soften in a fraction of the time. Moreover there is no danger that moisture from steam will get into and spoil the melted chocolate. For perfect results, break chocolate into small pieces for even melting and chop fruit or nuts finely to make shaping easier.

Storing petits fours

Some sweet mixtures need thorough chilling or even freezing before coating, so that they hold their shape. The sweets here keep well for 1-2 weeks in a cool place, except for the Mint Wafers, Chocolate Cups and Chocolate Creams, which need refrigerating. They are best served within 5-7 days, or the chocolate may dry and whiten. Serve petits fours in small paper cases — this shows them off to their best advantage and makes them easier to handle.

White Chocolate Truffles

White chocolate truffles

3 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz white chocolate
20ml / 4tsp double cream
1 large egg yolk
15g / ½oz butter, at room temperature
10ml / 2tsp white rum (optional)
175g / 6oz icing sugar, sifted
ground or finely chopped almonds or sifted icing sugar to coat

MAKES ABOUT 25

1 Break the chocolate into even pieces and place in a bowl, then microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-3½ minutes, stirring once, until melted.
2 Whisk the cream until thick and stir into the chocolate until evenly blended.
3 Beat in the egg yolk and butter. Stir well until the butter has melted. Stir in the rum, if using and mix until smooth.
4 Gradually mix in the icing sugar to form a fairly stiff mixture, then chill until quite firm.
5 Divide the mixture into about 25 even-sized balls and coat in the chopped nuts or icing sugar. Store in a cool place for a day, or for 2-3 days in the refrigerator.

RAY DUNS

Chocolate Creams

Cook's notes

All sorts of different attractive decorations are available — use yellow mimosa balls, crystallized violet pieces, whole unblanched almonds or crystallized orange or lemon slices.

Chocolate creams

5½ mins

Standing time: none

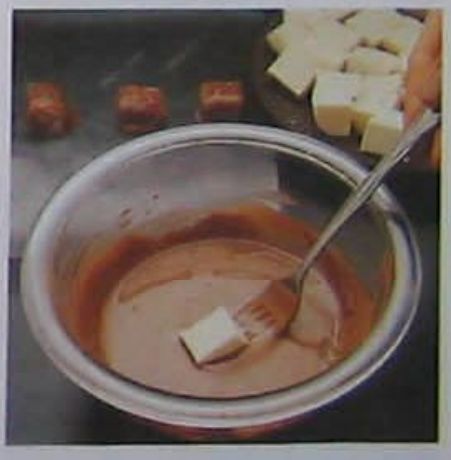
350g / 12oz white chocolate
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
225g / 8oz milk chocolate
decorations (see Cook's notes)

MAKES ABOUT 45

How to microwave Chocolate creams

Line *a 900g / 2lb loaf dish with greaseproof paper; set aside. Break the white chocolate in pieces and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 3-5 minutes, or until melted, stirring once. Pour in soured cream.*

Mix *the cream into the melted white chocolate and pour into the lined loaf dish, spreading it evenly to the edges. Cover and freeze overnight until solid, then cut into 2.5cm / 1in squares, using a sharp knife.*



Place *the milk chocolate in a large bowl and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 2½-3 minutes, stirring once, until melted. Dip squares in chocolate and place on greaseproof paper. Decorate; chill well.*

Dream bars

10 mins

Standing time: none

75g / 3oz butter or margarine
275g / 10oz soft brown sugar
100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
2 eggs, beaten
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
4ml / ¾tsp baking powder
150g / 5oz flaked coconut

MAKES ABOUT 48

Microtips

When microwaving the Dream Bars, it is best to use the 20cm / 8in dish as suggested, for even cooking. But if this is not available, use a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in rectangular dish. This will provide a very similar surface area and will cut easily into 48 pieces. Turn the dish several times during microwaving, as when using a square dish, to ensure even cooking.

How to microwave Dream bars

Mix *the butter with 60ml / 4tbls of the sugar until light and creamy. Work in the flour until the mixture is well combined and crumbly. Spread evenly and press over the base of a 20cm / 8in square dish, making the surface smooth and firm.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 4-7 minutes, until almost firm to the touch in the centre and nearly dry in appearance, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes, to ensure even cooking. The base should have a crisp, biscuity texture.*

Mix *the remaining sugar with the eggs, vanilla, baking powder and 75g / 3oz of the coconut. Beat together with an electric mixer at medium speed until evenly blended. Pour the beaten mixture over the cooked base and spread evenly.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 5-10 minutes, quarter turning three times, until firm. Sprinkle with remaining coconut. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-3 minutes until firm. Cool then cut into 48-49 squares. Store in an airtight container.*

Chinese chews

3 mins

Standing time: none

1 small egg (or ½ large egg)
65ml / 2½oz caster sugar
few drops of vanilla flavouring
1.5ml / ¼tsp baking powder
small pinch of salt
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
65g / 2½oz dates, finely chopped
25g / 1oz mixed nuts, chopped
sifted icing sugar, to coat

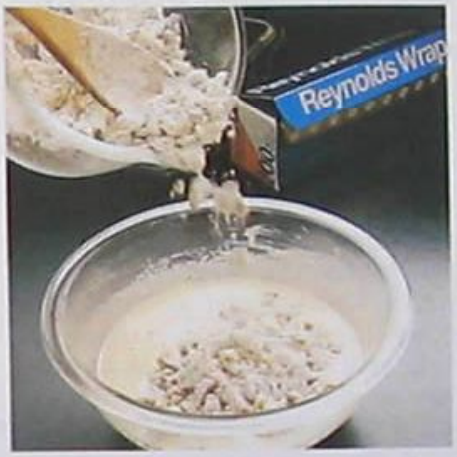
MAKES ABOUT 20

Cook's notes

For the minimum of mess when coating sweets with icing sugar, desiccated coconut or any other fine ingredient, place the coating in a polythene bag, add a few sweets at a time and shake the bag gently. When the sweets are coated all over, remove and repeat the procedure with the remaining sweets, adding more coating if needed.

Centre left: *Dream Bars*
Centre: *Chinese Chews*

How to microwave Chinese chews



Beat *the egg, sugar, vanilla, baking powder and salt together until pale, thick and creamy. Mix the flour, dates and nuts and stir into the egg mixture until evenly combined.*

Spread *in a greased 20cm / 8in square dish, shielding corners with foil. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, turning every minute. Remove foil after 2 minutes.*

Remove *and allow to cool. Cut into squares (20 large or about 50 small). Using completely dry hands, roll each piece into a ball between the palms, rounding off the corners.*

Coat *the sweets in sifted icing sugar then dust off any surplus. Store the Chinese Chews in an airtight container or sealed bag in a cool place for up to a week.*

Chocolate cups

2½ mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz plain cooking chocolate (or dark dessert type)
10ml / 2tsp oil
12 tiny scoops flavoured ice cream or sorbet to fill (see Cook's notes, below)

MAKES 12

1 Arrange twelve double-thickness paper sweet cases on a large plate or tray and set aside.
2 Break the chocolate into small, evenly-sized pieces and place in a bowl with the oil. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until the mixture is glossy and smooth when stirred, mixing briefly at one minute intervals.
3 Spoon 5ml / 1tsp of the melted chocolate mixture into each of the double paper sweet cases. Tilt each one so that the sides are coated to within 3mm / ⅛in of the tops. (The chocolate will start to become firm as it cools, so an even coating can be produced.)
4 Chill the coated sweet cases for at least 30 minutes to make sure the chocolate is firm before carefully peeling off the paper, making sure your hands are cool.
5 Return the chocolate cases to the refrigerator until needed. To serve, fill each cup with a small scoop of slightly softened flavoured ice cream or sorbet.
6 Do not store the chocolate cases for longer than 4-5 days in the refrigerator, or the chocolate may dry and become white.

Filled Chocolate Cups

Cook's notes

The best way to make even-shaped scoops of ice cream or sorbet for filling the chocolate cases is to use a melon baller. Dip it in warm water after each scoop to prevent colours and flavours from mixing, and to make it easier to cut into the ice cream.

Coconut date balls

5 mins

Standing time: none

150g / 5oz stoned dates, chopped
75g / 3oz caster sugar
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine, softened
1 small egg, beaten
20ml / 4tsp milk
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
30ml / 2tbls crushed cornflakes
25g / 1oz walnuts or pecans, chopped
50g / 2oz shredded or desiccated coconut

MAKES 24-30

1 Combine the dates, sugar and butter in a bowl and mix well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring several times. Mix well until all the butter is absorbed.
2 Beat together the egg, milk and vanilla and stir in a little of the hot date mixture. Pour back into the dates, stirring continuously.
3 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 3-4 minutes, or until the mixture is slightly thick. Stir frequently. Allow to cool for 15 minutes, until easy to handle.
4 Divide the mixture into four equal pieces and split each quarter into six. Roll each piece into a ball and coat with the shredded coconut. (See polythene bag method, Cook's notes, page 1157).
5 Place the coated sweets on a piece of greaseproof paper and chill until set. Store in the refrigerator or tightly covered at room temperature for up to two weeks, to enjoy the Coconut Date Balls at their best.

Microtips

The ingredients mix together better if the butter or margarine is softened, but not melted. Use the microwave to do this — soften the butter at 30% (Low) for about 5 seconds. This should be just enough to make the butter soft and easy to beat.

Apricot chews

2¼ mins

Standing time: none

40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz sugar
22.5ml / 1½tbls plain flour, sifted
small pinch of salt
1 egg, beaten
65g / 2½oz no-need-to-soak dried apricots, finely chopped
45ml / 3tbls wheatflake cereal, lightly crushed
50g / 2oz pecans or walnuts, chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
45-60ml / 3-4tbls icing sugar, sifted

MAKES 24-30

1 Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds or until melted. Stir in the sugar, flour, salt and egg, then mix in the apricots.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, or until thickened, stirring every minute. Allow to cool for 10 minutes.
3 Combine the cereal, nuts, vanilla and apricot mixture in a large bowl, mixing until all the ingredients are evenly distributed. Divide the mixture into quarters and form each into six equal pieces. Shape each piece into a ball and coat with icing sugar (see Cook's notes, page 1157). Refrigerate for 2-3 hours to firm before serving. Store in a cool place.

Mint wafers

1 min

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz chocolate chips
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
175g / 6oz icing sugar, sifted
1.5ml / ¼tsp peppermint flavouring
2-5 drops of green food colouring, according to taste
15-20ml / 3-4tsp milk

MAKES ABOUT 25

1 Place the chocolate chips and 25g / 1oz of the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until melted. Mix together until smooth.
2 Spread the melted mixture in a 20cm / 8in square dish or tray and cool. Chill for about an hour, or until set.
3 Mix the remaining butter with the sugar, peppermint flavouring and colouring in a bowl. Beat well, using an electric mixer, adding enough milk to make a stiff coating consistency.
4 Spread the mixture over the set chocolate and chill for 3-4 hours until firm. Cut into 25 squares. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

Freezer notes

As a rule, petits fours made with chocolate cannot be frozen successfully. The candy varieties can, if necessary, be frozen in sealed polythene bags for up to three months.

Below left: *Coconut Date Balls*
Centre: *Apricot Chews*
Right: *Mint Wafers*

Cooking with herbs

Herbs add a touch of magic to meat, salads or vegetables. Grow your own and use them freshly-cut, or buy the dried varieties — either way the microwave will retain all their delicious flavours.

For centuries herbs have been used to accentuate the flavour of food — and in really hard times to mask it! Now international cuisine is becoming more accessible to us all, the use of herbs is undergoing a revival.

In the microwave, both the flavour and colour of herbs remain quite distinct after cooking. Unlike many conventionally cooked dishes that retain little flavour of their herbs, a microwaved dish will be quite pungent. On this basis, it is a good idea to add fewer herbs than you would in conventional cooking — unless, of course, you prefer strong flavours.

Fresh herbs

For a ready supply of fresh herbs, grow your own. Many herbs make ideal pot or window box plants so you don't have to plant a herb garden. When using fresh herbs, only snip off as much as you need for a recipe. If you are given a few sprigs, keep them fresh in a jar of water.

Fresh herbs are increasingly available in small packs from

Lamb with Rosemary

MARTIN BRIGDALE

supermarkets. Keep these in their original wrappings in a cool, dry place and use within a day or two of purchase.

Dried herbs

A vast assortment of dried herbs is now available. With the microwave, it is easy to dry fresh herbs yourself. Store them individually, in airtight containers and use within three months.

When herbs are dried their flavour is intensified. So, when using dried herbs instead of fresh reduce the quantity by about one third to a half. With a few exceptions, most herbs are available fresh and dried.

When adding dried herbs to a dish, rub them a little between your fingers to help release their flavour. Dried herbs are not suitable for garnishing as they need to be cooked in the dish to bring out their flavour.

Freezer notes

Frozen herbs have a fresher colour and flavour than dried. Some freezer centres and large supermarkets sell them in small cartons, but it is easy to freeze your own. Finely chop fresh herbs, pack loosely in small tubs, seal and freeze for up to 1 month. Use straight from frozen.

How to dry herbs in the microwave

Loosely *pack leaves in a measuring jug until you have about 275ml / ½pt. Transfer to a close mesh colander and rinse under cold water. Drain, then dry on a clean tea towel.*

Spread *the herbs in a single layer on absorbent paper in the microwave. Cover with more paper and place a glass of water in the microwave to ensure a sufficient load.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, until the leaves feel dry and lose their bright, green colour. Stir to re-distribute the layer of herbs every 2 minutes.*

Tip *herbs on to clean absorbent paper; spread out and leave until cool and dry. Rub between your fingers and transfer to an airtight container. Label and store for up to 3 months.*

Lamb with rosemary

35½ mins

Standing time: 15 mins

This is a classic Mediterranean dish, the skin of the lamb is spiked with rosemary and garlic and their flavours permeate the whole roast during microwaving. Delicious!

1 boned shoulder of lamb, about 1.5kg / 3¼lb
10ml / 2tsp Worcestershire sauce
2-3 sprigs of rosemary
1 garlic clove, crushed

STUFFING

6 spring onions, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter
50g / 2oz fresh breadcrumbs
5ml / 1tsp dried thyme
5ml / 1tsp grated lemon zest
50g / 2oz raisins
salt and pepper
1 egg, beaten

SERVES 4-6

1 Make the stuffing: place the spring onions, celery and butter in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until tender, stirring once.

2 Remove from the microwave and stir in the breadcrumbs, thyme, lemon zest and raisins. Season to taste, then bind with the beaten egg.

3 Lay the lamb on a board and brush with Worcestershire sauce. With the skin side down, spread the stuffing on the lamb. Roll up to enclose the stuffing and tie at 2.5cm / 1in intervals with string.

4 Make small slits in the skin of the lamb with a sharp knife. Remove the rosemary needles and tuck a few needles and a little garlic in each slit. Weigh the lamb and calculate the microwaving time, allowing 10-15 minutes per 450g / 1lb depending on preferred doneness.

5 Stand the lamb on a roasting rack or in a shallow dish, then place in a vented roasting bag. Tie loosely. Microwave for 5 minutes at 100% (High), then at 50% Medium) for the remaining time. Stand for 15 minutes.

HERB/DESCRIPTION	USES
BASIL A pungent flavour with a sweet aroma. The fresh leaves have a superior flavour.	Goes well with all Mediterranean dishes. A must for all tomato dishes. Excellent with lamb.
BAY LEAVES Very strong flavour, especially if whole leaves are torn or crushed. One ingredient of a classic bouquet garni. Available dried whole or ground, as well as fresh.	Use in meat and poultry dishes, especially soups, casseroles and stews. Also for fish and vegetable dishes, pickles and stuffings. Remove from a cooked dish before serving.
OREGANO Flavour and aroma similar to marjoram, but stronger.	Use in spicy Greek, Mexican and Italian dishes.
PARSLEY Two types — flat-leaved (French or Continental) or curly leaved. The stalks are included in a bouquet garni.	Popular herb which goes well with almost any dish. Parsley sauce is excellent with boiled ham or fish.
ROSEMARY Needle shaped leaves that need to be chopped before use. Tea-like aroma and bitter-sweet flavour.	In meat dishes, particularly lamb. Also stuffings and marinades.
SAGE Pungent, slightly bitter aroma. Flavour can be strong and over-powering if used in excess.	Use to flavour meat, particularly pork; and also bean and cheese dishes. Excellent with sausages and in stuffings.
TARRAGON Two varieties — the Russian is more common, the French has a superior flavour. A sweet, aromatic flavour, with an aniseed like tang.	Include in sauces, poultry, seafood, cheese and egg dishes. Also good with vegetables and in salad dressings, particularly with mayonnaise.
THYME Many varieties. The easiest and most successful herb to dry. Pungent and aromatic.	Add to meat and poultry dishes, also soups, stuffings and dressings. Excellent, with vegetables.
DILL Pretty, feathery leaves with a flavour similar to caraway. The dried herb is known as dillweed.	Use in meat dishes, particularly pork, also poultry, fish, cheese, egg, vegetable and Italian style dishes.
FENNEL The fern-like leaves have an aniseed flavour.	With lamb; potatoes and peas. Use also to garnish drinks and in cocktails.
MARJORAM Spicy, slightly bitter flavour.	Superb with fish and potato dishes.
MINT Many varieties. Strong, distinctively sweet and aromatic.	Use the fresh leaves to flavour and / or garnish fish and pâtés or soups.
CHERVIL Like a delicate parsley but with no smell. A faintly sweet flavour, similar to tarragon.	Used in French dishes, especially egg, cheese and chicken ones. Cook in soups, salads, sauces and stews.
CHIVES A member of the onion family. The spiky leaves are best snipped with scissors rather than chopped.	Excellent in salads or omelettes, and in any dishes where a subtle onion flavour is needed.
CORIANDER Scented aromatic leaves only available fresh. The seeds are sold as a spice.	Chop leaves into Indian dishes or use as garnish instead of parsley.

Stewed chicken with herbs

27 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1.1-1.4kg / 2½-3lb chicken, cut into eight pieces, skinned
1 onion, thinly sliced
2 carrots, chopped
75g / 3oz mushrooms, sliced
75ml / 3fl oz white wine
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
1 thin lemon slice
5ml / 1tsp dried savory
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
pinch of pepper
2 garlic cloves, halved
½ × 425g / 15oz can cream of chicken soup
200ml / 7fl oz chicken stock

SERVES 4

1 Place the chicken (thickest parts to the outside) vegetables, herbs and flavourings in a 3.4L / 6pt casserole. Mix together the soup and stock, add to casserole.
2 Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 27-33 minutes, or until the meat near the bone is no longer pink and the juices run clear. Turn and rearrange the chicken once. Stand for 5 minutes, then serve.

Chived potatoes

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 large baking potatoes, 225g / 8oz each, scrubbed and pricked
75ml / 3fl oz warm milk
30ml / 2tbls salad cream or mayonnaise
15ml / 1tbls melted butter or margarine
salt and pepper
5ml / 1tsp chopped dried chives or 2.5ml /½tsp fresh chives

SERVES 2

1 Microwave the potatoes at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, wrap in foil and stand for 5 minutes.
2 Slice each potato in half lengthways and scoop out the centres, taking care not to pierce the skins.
3 Mash the potato with the milk, mayonnaise, butter, and seasoning. Spoon the mixture into the potato shells and sprinkle the chives over the top.
4 Place the potatoes on a plate, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until hot.

VARIATION
To add piquancy to the baked potato filling combine crisply-cooked bacon with cottage cheese and a sprinkling of chives. Make a slit in the piping hot potatoes, fill and serve.

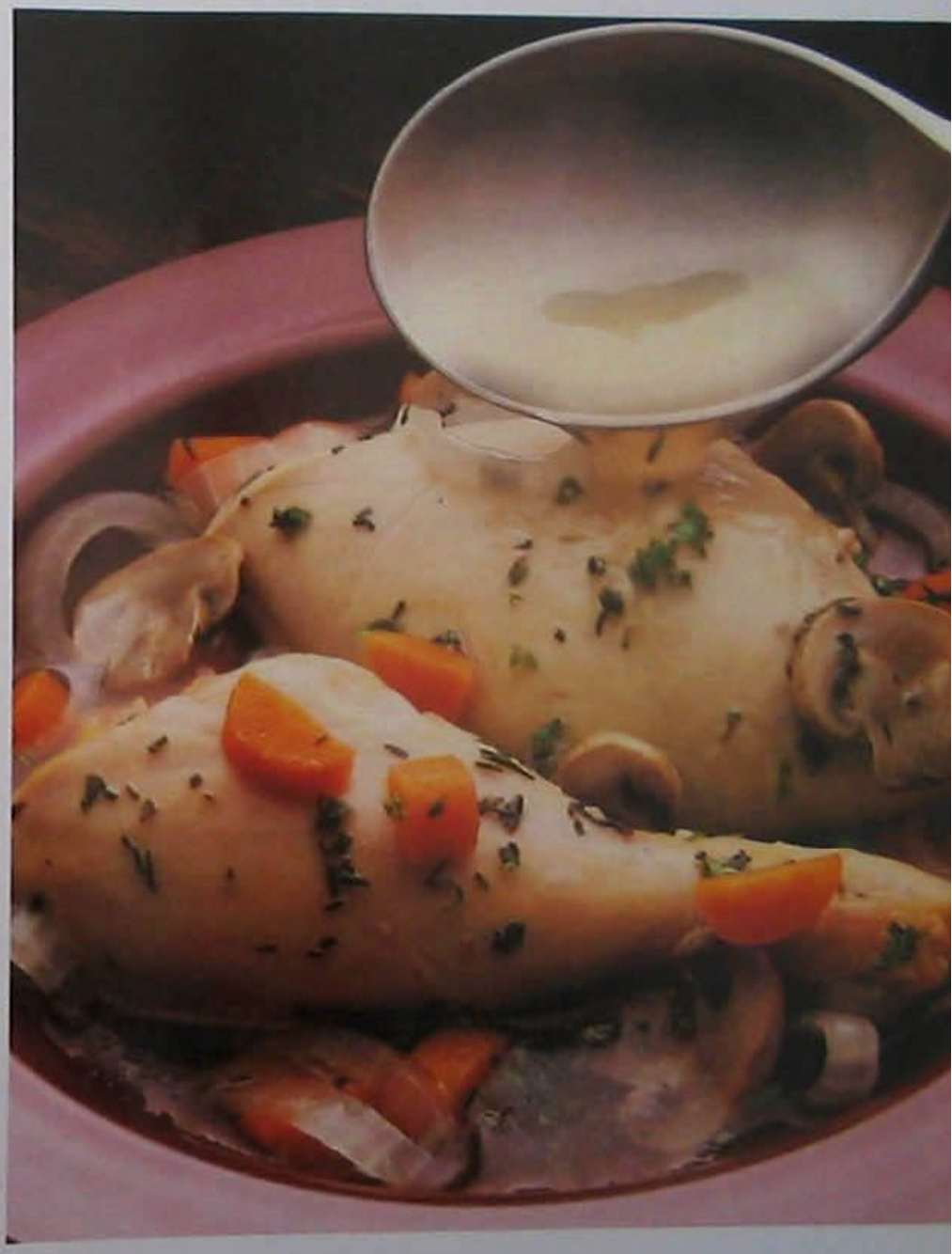
Stewed Chicken with Herbs

Microtips

When drying home-grown herbs in the microwave, make sure to include a glass of water to absorb excess energy.

Cook's notes

This is a good dish to prepare ahead — the potatoes can be made the day before and kept in the refrigerator. Reheat, straight from chilled, at 100% for 4-5 minutes.



Vegetable salad

8¾ mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz frozen cauliflower florets
½ small onion, thinly sliced into rings
1 small green pepper, seeded and finely sliced
1 tomato, coarsely chopped

MARINADE
50ml / 2fl oz red wine vinegar
50ml / 2fl oz olive or vegetable oil
15ml / 1tbls soft brown sugar
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
salt and pepper
pinch of mustard powder

SERVES 3-4

1 Combine all the marinade ingredients in a large bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, or until the sugar has dissolved, stirring halfway through.
2 Add the cauliflower florets, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes. Cut any large florets in half and microwave for a further 3-3½ minutes.
3 Stir in the onion and pepper, toss well to coat. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until the vegetables are tender but still crisp, stirring once.
4 Stir in the tomato, cover and chill for at least an hour before serving.

Vegetable Salad

Rosemary carrots

8 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb carrots, thinly sliced
60ml / 4tbls hot strong chicken stock
15ml / 1tbls soft light brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp dried rosemary
5ml / 1tsp chopped dried chives
pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the carrots in a bowl or casserole. Mix together the stock, sugar, crushed rosemary, chives and pepper and pour over the carrots. Toss to coat.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until the carrots are just tender, stirring twice during cooking. Stand for 3 minutes, then serve.

Herby tomato sauce

11 mins

Standing time: none

This chunky sauce can be served with fish, meat or poultry — or try it as a tasty pizza topping.

15ml / 3tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls water
4 tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
1 small onion, finely chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried marjoram
pinch of powdered garlic
salt and black pepper

MAKES ABOUT 300ml / ½pt

1 Blend the cornflour and water together in a small bowl. Combine all the other ingredients in a large bowl or casserole and stir in the cornflour mixture.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir, re-cover and continue to microwave at 100% (High) for 6-10 minutes or until the onion and pepper are tender and the sauce has thickened, stirring once.

Hot and spicy 1

Hot and spicy dishes are usually associated with Indian and South American recipes, but why not take advantage of the aromatic and pungent seasonings used to add pep and flavour to everyday dishes?

Fast food need not be boring 'samey' dishes day after day. With a little imagination and a pinch or two of peppy seasoning it is easy to transform basic and economical dishes into more exciting fare. The flavours and effects of 'fiery' seasonings (such as chilli and curry powder) vary enormously, according to the type and the amount used. Choose the flavourings with care to compliment, but not overpower other ingredients.

Hot spices and seasonings

Curry powder is a blend of spices (cumin, coriander, chilli powder and so on) and is an extremely useful ingredient for adding flavour and spice. It is sold in various strengths.

Chilli powder is a fine-ground, red-coloured pepper made from dried hot chillies. It is very fiery, so beware when adding to dishes.

Chilli seasoning is also popular, but has a much milder flavour. Don't confuse chilli powder with the bright red **paprika** pepper. This is made from red peppers and comes in mild and hot flavours (according to the variety of peppers used). It is the main flavouring ingredient for Hungarian Goulash. **Tabasco sauce** (or hot pepper sauce) is, as the name implies, a liquid flavouring made from hot chillies. It is extremely fiery so should be used in very small quantities. You will find it particularly good with tomato mixtures and dishes containing cheese.

Cumin is a herb, available either in seed or ground form. It has a strong, aromatic flavour that goes particularly well with beef, rice and pasta dishes.

Coriander: the feathery green leaves of this plant are aromatic and slightly bitter and used to garnish dishes. The seeds (available whole or ground) are a spice. They have an 'orangey' flavour which is delicious with chicken.

Root ginger: the knobbly — root is available dried or fresh. The dried root is more often used in pickling, whereas the fresh type is added to mixtures during cooking. Use ginger sparingly to give a subtly hot flavour.

Mexican Pancakes

Beef chilli

14 mins

Standing time: none

1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
15g / ½oz margarine
1 onion, chopped
5ml / 1tsp ground cumin
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder
1 garlic clove, crushed
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
411g / 14.5oz can stewed steak in gravy (or steak and onion)
432g / 15.25oz can red kidney beans, drained

SERVES 4

1 Combine the green pepper, margarine, onion, cumin and chilli powder in a bowl. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, stirring once during the cooking time.
2 Add the garlic, canned tomatoes, steak and drained beans. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir well, then uncover and microwave for a further 5 minutes or until piping hot. Serve with plain boiled rice and a nice crispy green salad.

VARIATIONS
Canned red peppers may be used instead of the fresh green pepper if preferred to make this dish a good store-cupboard standby.

Mexican pancakes

9½ mins

Standing time: none

Tostada shells (fried corn pancakes) are sold in cans; they are available from some large supermarkets and delicatessens. If hard to obtain, use poppadums (see back cover, Part 22) or lightly toasted flat pitta-style breads.

432g / 15.25oz can red kidney beans, drained
120ml / 8tbls water
1 small onion, finely chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cumin
salt and pepper
225g / 8oz minced beef
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder
1 garlic clove, crushed
4 tostada shells
8 lettuce leaves, shredded
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, coarsely grated
2 tomatoes, chopped
8 black olives, stoned and chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
60ml / 4tbls soured cream

SERVES 4

1 Put the drained kidney beans in a bowl with the water, one-third of the chopped onion, 1.5ml / ¼tsp cumin and salt and pepper to taste. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes. Remove cover and mash beans thoroughly until soft and creamy; reserve and keep warm.
2 In a small bowl, mix the minced beef with the remaining onion and cumin. Stir in the chilli powder, salt and pepper to taste and the garlic. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until the meat is no longer pink, stirring once to break up meat. Drain off excess juices. Keep warm.
3 Place the tostada shells in a stack on a sheet of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds until hot.
4 Arrange toasted shells on four hot serving plates, then spread each one with a layer of the mashed beans. Cover with the beef mixture and top each one with shredded lettuce, grated cheese, tomatoes, olives, green pepper and soured cream. Serve at once.

Beef Chilli

To seed fresh chillies

The seeds are the 'hottest' part of the chilli pepper; remove them if you want a dish with less 'heat'. Handle chillies with care — they contain a pungent oil which can cause burning in the eyes, nose and throat. Wear rubber gloves, do not touch your face while preparing them and always wash your hands afterwards.

To remove the seeds from chillies: snap off the stem, then split open the pod and scrape out the seeds. Rinse inside the pod before using. Infuse cleaned chillies in vinegar or sherry to make a hot condiment.

Spicy Beef Casserole

Spicy beef casserole

11¼ mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz tagliatelle noodles
75g / 3oz cream cheese
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 onion, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
225g / 8oz Italian tomato sauce
100g / 4oz cottage cheese
2.5ml / ½tsp Tabasco sauce
salt and pepper
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
30-45ml / 2-3tbls soured cream
paprika
1 tomato, sliced (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Cook the tagliatelle conventionally, or in the microwave (see Microtips right).

2 Put the cream cheese in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until softened.

3 Combine the beef, onion, celery and green pepper in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until meat is cooked and vegetables are tender. Stir once during cooking to break up meat; drain.

4 Stir in the Italian sauce, cottage cheese, softened cream cheese, Tabasco, salt and pepper to taste and basil. Add the cooked tagliatelle and stir well. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes until hot and bubbly, stirring twice during the cooking time.

5 Stir in the soured cream, sprinkle with paprika and arrange tomato slices on top of casserole. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes or until hot.

Microtips

To microwave the tagliatelle: put 700ml / 1¼pt boiling water in a deep 2.3L / 4pt dish and add 2.5ml / ½tsp salt and 15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil. Add the pasta to dish and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until just tender. Let pasta stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Rinse under hot water and drain thoroughly.

How to microwave Spicy beef casserole

Stir *mixture twice during stage 4 to make sure the heat is evenly distributed throughout.*

Reduce *the power to 50% (Medium) after stage 5 to prevent the cream overheating and curdling.*

Left: *Creamy Curried Chicken*
Below: *Curried Egg Patties*

Creamy curried chicken

9½ mins

Standing time: none

1 onion, thinly sliced
15g / ½oz margarine
10-15ml / 2-3tsp curry powder
1 potato, diced
1 carrot, cut into matchsticks
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
275ml / ½pt milk
225g / 8oz cooked chicken, chopped
salt and pepper
1 garlic clove, crushed
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt

SERVES 4

1 Mix the onion, margarine, curry powder, potato, carrot and green pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Smoothly blend the cornflour with the milk and stir into the cooked vegetables. Cover and cook at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.
3 Stir in the chicken, salt and pepper to taste, garlic and yoghurt. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, or until hot. Serve with boiled rice.

Creamy curried chicken for two: halve the ingredients. Cook vegetables for 4 minutes; sauce for 2½ minutes and finished dish for 30 seconds.

Curried egg patties

17¼ mins

Standing time: none

10ml / 2tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls soft brown sugar
15ml / 1tbls sherry
2.5ml / ½tsp soy sauce
150ml / ¼pt chicken stock
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
2 spring onions, finely chopped
4 eggs
2.5ml / ½tsp curry powder
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil

SERVES 4

1 Smoothly blend cornflour with brown sugar, sherry, soy sauce and all but 30ml / 2tbls stock in a jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes or until the sauce is boiling; stir twice, then reserve.
2 Put the celery in a bowl, cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stir in the spring onions.
3 Beat eggs with curry powder and remaining stock; mix into the lightly cooked celery. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, then stir to blend. Recover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 1½-2 minutes until the egg is set. Divide into four patties.
4 Heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to manufacturer's instructions. Pour on the oil, then add each portion of egg. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes; turn and microwave for a further 2-3 minutes until lightly browned.
5 Reheat the sauce at 100% (High) for 45 seconds, then serve at once with the hot egg patties.

Oriental chicken

6 mins

Standing time: none

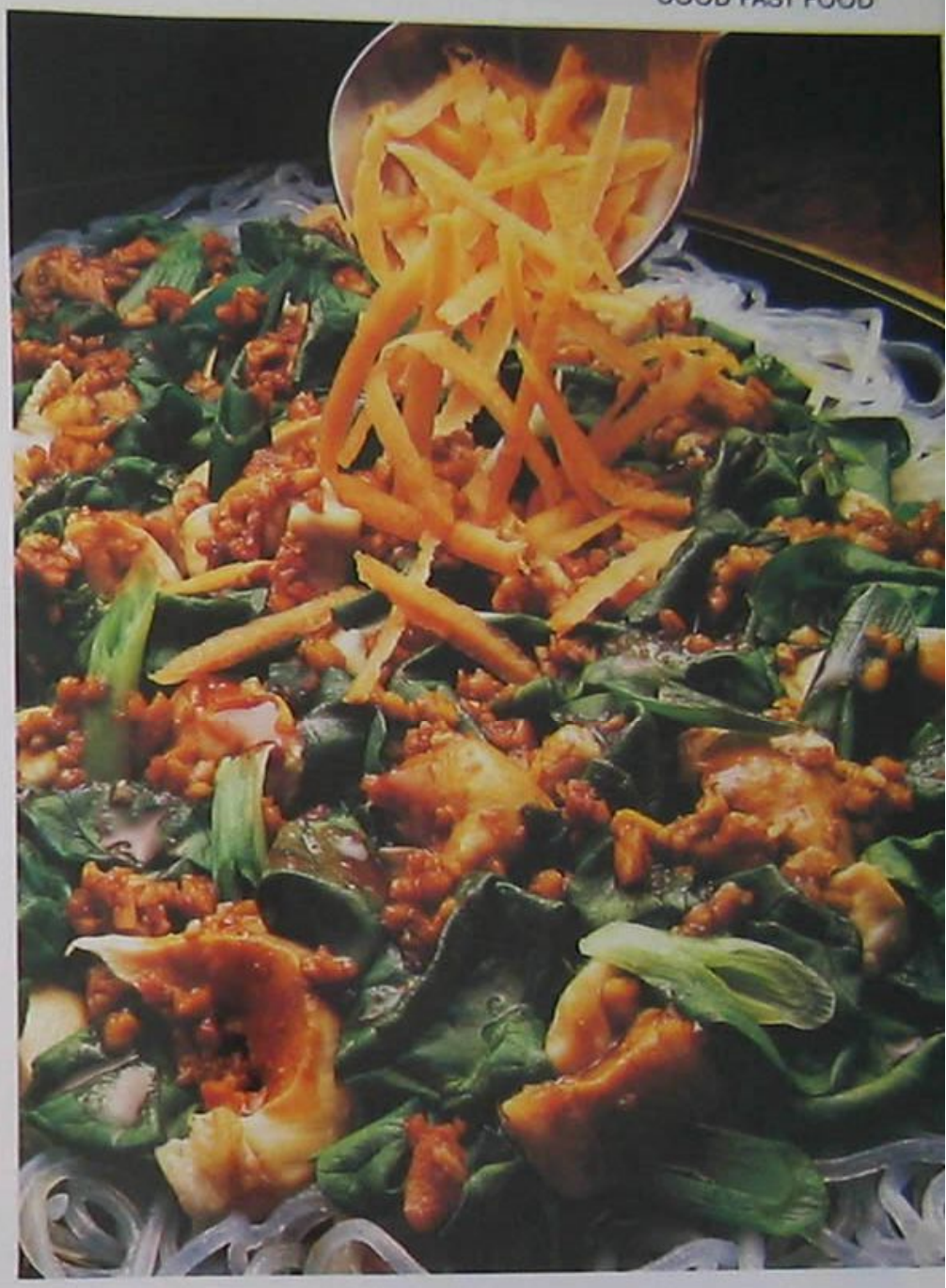
Cellophane noodles, which are available from Chinese supermarkets, are used in this dish. However, the same quantity of chow mein egg noodles give an equally delicious result.

225g / 8oz boneless chicken breast, skinned and cut into 12mm / ½in strips
6 spring onions, sliced
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
10ml / 2tsp runny honey
1 garlic clove, crushed
12mm / ½in piece fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground coriander
large pinch of chilli powder
50g / 2oz dry roasted peanuts
100g / 4oz cellophane noodles
225g / 8oz fresh spinach, coarsely chopped
1 carrot, coarsely grated

SERVES 4

Freezer notes

Frozen leaf spinach may be used if fresh is unavailable. Put the frozen spinach in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9 minutes, stirring halfway through. Drain.



Combine *the chicken and onions in a casserole. Cover and set aside. In a measuring jug, combine the soy sauce, lemon juice, honey, garlic, ginger, coriander and chilli powder; set aside. Finely chop the peanuts in an electric mill or a food processor.*

Cook *the noodles conventionally, following packet instructions. Meanwhile, microwave the chicken and onions at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink; stir once. Add spinach, re-cover and microwave for 2-2½ minutes.*

Drain *cooking liquid from casserole into soy sauce mixture and make up to 150ml / ¼pt with water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes; stir once. Stir in chopped peanuts. Top the noodles with chicken mixture, pour over sauce and sprinkle with carrot.*

Veal Steaks

Veal steaks are the perfect choice for an elegant meal. They're versatile and tasty — whether microwaved simply with crunchy coating, bathed in a rich creamy sauce, or given a colourful topping.

Veal steaks microwave beautifully, taste superb and by being beaten out, go a surprisingly long way. Unlike thinly sliced veal escalopes, veal steaks are cut quite thickly, about the thickness of beef steak. They are taken from the rump — the prime cut in veal — and weigh about 100-175g / 4-6oz each.

Veal steaks are excellent simply microwaved in a little butter or cooked in a sauce. They should be lightly beaten out before cooking. This helps tenderize the meat and means it can be microwaved at the highest setting. If cooking in a sauce, however, use a lower setting to ensure even cooking.

Veal should never be served underdone: the meat is cooked when it is no longer pink and the juices run clear. Stand for 5 minutes. Serve with noodles or potatoes and a green vegetable.

Crispy-coated Veal

RAYNERS

Crispy-coated veal

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 veal steaks (100g / 4oz each)
1 egg
50g / 2oz cornflakes, finely crushed
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls oil
25g / 1oz butter
lemon wedges, to garnish

SERVES 4

Cook's notes

Veal steaks should be lightly beaten out before cooking. Trim away any fat or fibrous tissue, otherwise meat will shrink unevenly during microwaving which will spoil the shape. Place each steak between two sheets of cling film. Beat gently with a meat mallet or rolling pin to 12mm / ½in thickness

Don't be too heavy handed with the meat mallet though, as this will make the veal tough and dry.

How to microwave Crispy-coated veal

Trim *the steaks of excess fat or gristle, then place on a firm board between two sheets of cling film. Gently beat out to an even 12mm / ½in thickness, using a large wooden spoon, meat mallet or a rolling pin.*

Beat *the egg in a shallow bowl. Mix the cornflakes and salt and pepper and place on a plate or on a sheet of greaseproof paper. Dip veal steaks into the egg and then coat on both sides with the crushed cornflakes.*

Preheat *a large browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add the oil and butter, tilting the dish if necessary to coat the base. Add the veal in a single layer.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Turn veal over and cook for a further 4-6 minutes or until veal is tender and meat juices run clear. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes, then garnish with slices of lemon and serve.*

Mediterranean veal steaks

18 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

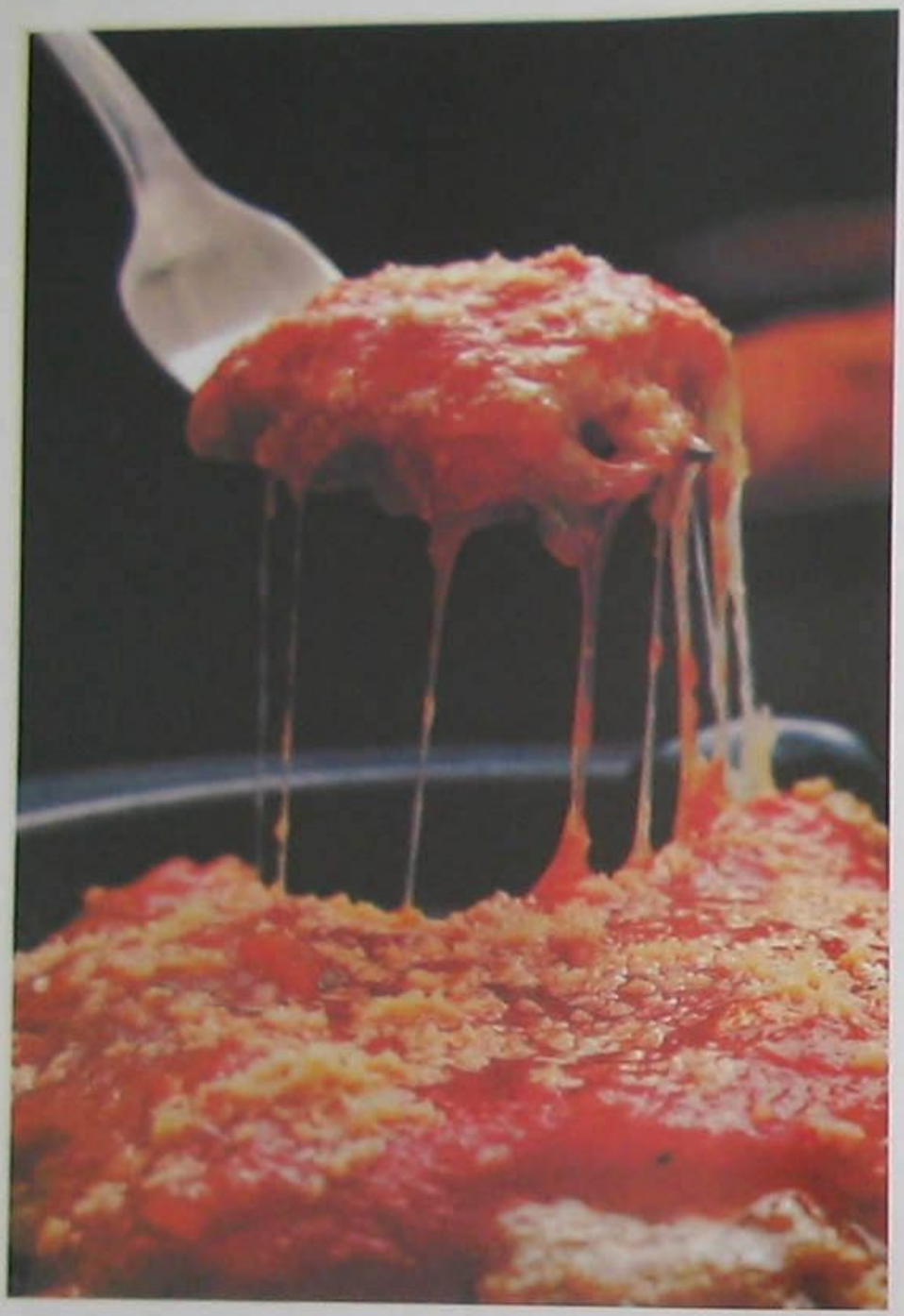
150ml / ¼pt dry white wine
60ml / 4tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
pinch of chopped basil
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
1 onion, chopped
4 veal steaks (about 100g / 4oz each) beaten out to 12mm / ½in thickness
2 courgettes, finely sliced
3 tomatoes, finely sliced
100g / 4oz Mozzarella cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Place the wine in a small bowl, stir in ketchup or sauce, the herbs and seasoning; set aside.
2 Place oil and onion in a large shallow dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes or until onion is tender. Add veal, re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 2 minutes.
3 Turn the veal over and arrange the sliced courgettes and tomatoes on top. Pour the wine mixture over the top and cover with vented cling film.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes or until meat is no longer pink and the meat juices run clear.
5 Sprinkle with the grated cheese and microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 3-5 minutes or until cheese melts. Stand for 5 minutes. Serve with sautéed potatoes and creamed spinach.

Microtips

If veal steaks are not available, veal escalopes can be used instead. Microwaving times are the same but since escalopes are sliced more thinly than steaks, they will probably not need beating out unless they are more than 12mm / ½in thick. There is also no need to stand escalopes before serving.



Cheesy veal steaks

13 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

376g / 13oz Italian-style tomato and onion sauce
large pinch dried oregano
salt and pepper
60ml / 4tbls grated Parmesan cheese
60ml / 4tbls browned breadcrumbs
4 veal steaks (about 100g / 4oz each) beaten out to 12mm / ½in thickness
1 egg, beaten
100g / 4oz Emmental or Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Mix tomato and onion sauce, oregano and seasoning in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stir and set aside.

2 Mix 45ml / 3tbls Parmesan cheese with the breadcrumbs and place on a plate. Dip the veal into the beaten egg and then coat on both sides with the breadcrumb mixture.

3 Place the steaks in a large shallow casserole. Cover with buttered greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes or until meat is tender and juices run clear, rearranging steaks halfway through cooking.

4 Drain and discard the juices

Left: *Cheesy Veal Steaks*
Below: *Tarragon Veal Steaks*

from the dish. Sprinkle the veal with the Emmental or Cheddar cheese and pour over the tomato and onion sauce. Sprinkle the top with remaining Parmesan.
5 Cover loosely with greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until the cheese melts and sauce is hot. Allow to stand for 5 minutes.

Tarragon veal steaks

7½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

40g / 1½oz butter
20ml / 4tsp water
10ml / 2tsp white wine vinegar
¼ chicken stock cube
10ml / 2tsp chopped tarragon or 5ml / 1tsp dried
pepper, to taste
4 veal steaks (about 100g / 4oz each) beaten out to 12mm / ½in thickness
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
45ml / 3tbls milk

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter, water, vinegar, chicken stock cube, tarragon and pepper in a bowl. Microwave,

Lemon Dill Veal

covered, at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds or until butter melts. Stir well to dissolve stock cube.
2 Place veal in a large shallow casserole and add chicken stock and tarragon. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6-8 minutes, or until veal is tender and juices run clear, turning once.
3 Place veal on a serving dish, cover and stand for 5 minutes.
4 Meanwhile, make sauce. Blend the flour with the milk and stir into stock, blending well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until hot and slightly thickened, stirring once or twice. Pour into a sauce boat. Serve with veal.

Cook's notes

Although fresh tarragon has the best flavour, dried tarragon can be rehydrated and makes a very good alternative in this and other recipes. Place the dried herb in a jug, cover with boiling water and leave for 5 minutes, then strain. The freshened herb will then be ready for use with the veal steaks.

Lemon dill veal

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

67.5ml / 4½tbls browned breadcrumbs
4ml / ¾tsp dillweed
salt and pepper
1 egg
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
4 veal steaks (about 100g / 4oz each) beaten out to 12mm / ½in thickness
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
25g / 1oz butter
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
½ onion, chopped

SERVES 4

1 Mix the breadcrumbs, dillweed and seasoning. Beat egg with the lemon juice. Dip veal in egg and breadcrumbs, coating evenly.
2 Preheat a large browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add the oil, butter and veal. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Turn veal; add mushrooms and onion. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.

Fruit combinations

Use fresh fruit to add a tang to salads, or make a mouthwatering finale to a meal. Fresh fruit combinations offer a wealth of colours, textures and flavours to excite and delight your taste buds.

The microwave is ideal for cooking fruit. Baked, poached or simply heated through, microwaved fruits retain their vibrant colours and firm textures. With care, even delicate fruits can be warmed through without losing their shape.

Modern methods of processing and preserving have made a great variety of fruit available all year round. Now you can mix and match fresh, frozen and canned fruits to create a host of colourful desserts.

Flavour and colour are not the

French Fruit Flan

only advantages of the recipes here. Fruit (especially fresh fruit) is rich in vitamins, and, provided you use fruit canned in natural juice — not syrup — and don't add extra sugar, it makes a slimmer's pudding as well.

Start by choosing fruit in peak condition. Store carefully, and spend a little time preparing it for microwaving. Cut into even-sized pieces to ensure even cooking. Microwave soft fruit in the minimum amount of water to retain all their goodness and flavour.

French fruit flan

6 mins

Standing time: none

25cm / 10in sponge flan case
700-900g / 1½-2lb mixed fruits, prepared

ALMOND CREAM
2 egg yolks
50g / 2oz caster sugar
52.5ml / 3½tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt milk
67.5ml / 4½tbls ground almonds
1 drop of almond flavouring

GLAZE
275ml / ½pt sparkling or still white wine
22.5ml / 4½tsp arrowroot
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar

SERVES 6

1 Make the almond cream: mix the egg yolks, sugar and flour to a paste in a bowl. Microwave the milk at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, and stir into the egg mixture. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes. Stir in the almonds and flavouring and cover surface with cling film. Leave to cool.

2 Make the glaze: blend 45ml / 3tbls of the wine with the arrowroot and the sugar. Microwave the remaining wine at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until hot, whisk into the blended mixture. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, until thickened and boiling, whisking twice. Allow to cool.

3 Pour the cooled almond cream into the flan case and spread evenly.

4 Arrange the fruits decoratively in the flan case.

5 Spoon the glaze carefully over the fruits, making sure they are all covered. Chill until ready to serve.

VARIATIONS

Instead of wine, use the same quantity of reserved syrup from the canned fruit, and omit the sugar if preferred.

Unusual fruits such as canned guava halves or figs, melon cubes, or blackberries, can be used.

Baked Ambrosia

Baked ambrosia

2½ mins

Standing time: none

2 large oranges
340g / 12oz can pineapple cubes, drained
22ml / 1½tbls soft light brown sugar
15ml / 1tbls runny honey
30ml / 2tbls desiccated coconut
4 maraschino cherries

SERVES 4

1 Halve the oranges horizontally. Remove the segments using a grapefruit knife, remove and discard the pith and pips. Place the segments in a bowl. Stir in the pineapple cubes, sugar, honey and coconut.

2 Divide the mixture equally between the orange shells and top each with a cherry. Put on individual serving dishes and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes or until warmed through. Rotate the oranges a half turn, once. Serve immediately.

VARIATION

Grapefruit gives a tarter flavour.

Cook's notes

The density of fruit affects cooking times — if you are cooking pineapple with strawberries for instance, start off with the denser-textured pineapple and add the more delicate strawberries to the dish only a very few minutes before the end of microwaving time.

Savoury fruit salad

1 min

Standing time: none

This salad dressing stores in the refrigerator for a week.

2 × 298g / 10½oz cans mandarin segments, drained
225g / 8oz green grapes, halved and seeded
lettuce leaves, to serve

DRESSING
50ml / 2fl oz wine vinegar
5ml / 1tsp chopped mint or 2.5ml / ½tsp dried
finely grated zest of 1 orange
pinch of celery salt
15ml / 1tbls runny honey
150ml / ¼pt sunflower oil

SERVES 4

Left: *Savoury Fruit Salad*
Below: *Nutty Fruit Slaw*

1 For the dressing, put the vinegar into a small bowl with the mint. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Leave until cold, then strain.
2 Put the remaining dressing ingredients in a screw top jar, add the mint-flavoured vinegar and mix well.
3 Assemble the salad just before serving. Arrange the fruit on a bed of lettuce leaves and spoon over the dressing.

VARIATION
Instead of canned, use fresh mandarin segments with all the white pith removed. Allow 2-4 fruit, depending on size.

Microtips

If you only have thick honey, measure into a small cup and microwave for 15 seconds at 100% (High) until runny before using.

Nutty fruit slaw

2¾ mins

Standing time: none

This crunchy salad keeps for up to two days in the refrigerator. It goes well with cold or hot meats, such as chicken or ham.

350g / 12oz white or green cabbage, shredded and chopped
376g / 13¾oz can crushed pineapple, well drained
2 × 298g / 10½oz cans mandarin orange segments, drained
50g / 2oz walnuts, chopped

DRESSING
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper
225ml / 8fl oz creamy milk
60ml / 4tbls apple juice
15ml / 1tbls white wine or cider vinegar
2 egg yolks, beaten

SERVES 4-6

1 First make the dressing. Microwave the butter in a large covered jug or bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, until melted.
2 Stir in the flour, then blend in the remaining dressing ingredients, except the egg yolks. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until thickened; stir after 1½ minutes, then every 30 seconds.
3 Stir a small amount of the dressing into the beaten yolks, then stir thoroughly into the hot mixture.
4 In a large bowl, combine the salad ingredients. Pour over the dressing and toss until the salad ingredients are well coated. Chill for at least 2 hours before serving.

Cook's notes

Make sure to remove bitter pith from grapefruit segments Microwaving releases the juice but segments keep their shape.

Sherried fruit salad

4½ mins

Standing time: none

1 grapefruit, segmented
2 peaches, skinned, stoned and sliced
60ml / 4tbls grapefruit juice
30ml / 2tbls sweet sherry
225g / 8oz strawberries, hulled and halved
100g / 4oz seedless green grapes

SAUCE
65ml / 2½fl oz double cream
22.5ml / 4½tsp sugar
7.5ml / 1½tsp plain flour
7g / ¼oz butter

SERVES 4

Sherried Fruit Salad

1 Remove all the white pith from the grapefruit segments then place in a bowl with the peach slices, fruit juice and sherry. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until slightly softened.
2 Allow the mixture to cool, then carefully stir in the remaining fruit. Cover and chill.
3 Make the sauce: combine all the ingredients in a round bowl or jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, whisk after every 30 seconds. Cool, then transfer to the refrigerator to chill.
4 To serve, transfer the fruit salad to four individual serving bowls and spoon over the sauce just before serving.

Fruit pudding

5½ mins

Standing time: none

340g / 12oz can pineapple cubes in syrup or natural juice, drained, juice reserved
411g / 14½oz can peach slices in syrup, drained, syrup reserved
425g / 15oz can cherries in syrup, stoned, drained, syrup reserved
33g / 1¼oz packet vanilla blancmange powder, or 60ml / 4tbls custard powder and 15ml / 1tbls sugar
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring (with custard powder only)
1 banana, sliced

SERVES 5-6

1 Make the reserved juice from the pineapple and peaches up to 575ml / 1pt with cherry juice.
2 Blend the blancmange powder or custard powder and sugar with 60ml / 4tbls of the fruit juices.
3 Microwave the remaining juices at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, or until hot. Whisk the hot juice in to the blended mixture.
4 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes whisking twice, or until thickened. Stir in the vanilla flavouring if using.
5 Cover the surface with cling film, cool, then chill for 1 hour. Mix in the pineapple, peach slices and cherries. Chill again. Add banana just before serving.

Gingered peach parfait

7 mins

Standing time: none

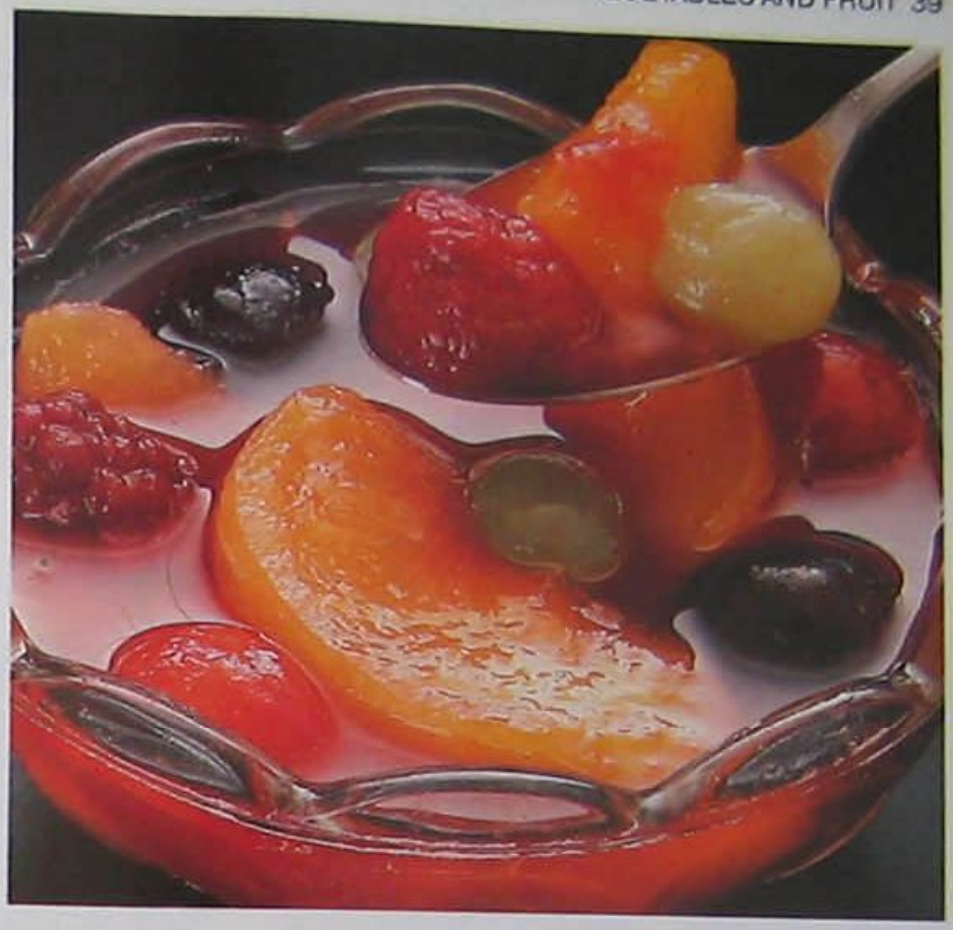
33g / 1¼oz packet vanilla blancmange powder, or 60ml / 4tbls custard powder and 50g / 2oz sugar
575ml / 1pt milk
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring (with custard powder mix only)
225g / 8oz canned peach slices in syrup, drained and chopped
298g / 10½oz can mandarin segments, drained
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon

Fruit Pudding

1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
150ml / ¼pt sweetened, whipped cream

SERVES 4

1 In a large bowl, blend blancmange powder or custard powder and sugar with 60ml / 4tbls milk.
2 Microwave remaining milk in a tall jug at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes, until almost boiling. Whisk the hot milk into blended blancmange or custard mixture. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, whisking three times, or until thickened and boiled. Stir in vanilla flavouring, if using.
3 Add the peaches and mandarins mixing well. Lay cling film on surface to prevent a skin forming. Cool, then chill for 2 hours.
4 Blend the spices and cream.
5 Fill four sundae glasses with layers of peach mixture and cream, finishing with cream. Cover, chill before serving.



Easy fruit salad

2 mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
410g / 14½oz can peach slices in natural juice, drained, 150ml / ¼pt juice reserved
75g / 3oz green grapes, seeded
75g / 3oz black grapes, seeded
175g / 6oz fresh or frozen raspberries

SERVES 4

1 Make the syrup: place the sugar and reserved peach juice in a tall jug; microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes or until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is boiling, stirring after one minute.
2 If using frozen raspberries, add to the syrup and set aside to cool.
3 Combine the peaches and grapes in a serving bowl. Add the fresh raspberries, if using. Pour over the syrup. Stir gently to mix, then cover and chill for 2 hours before serving.

Above: *Easy Fruit Salad*
Left: *Gingered Peach Parfait*

Egg-enriched sauces

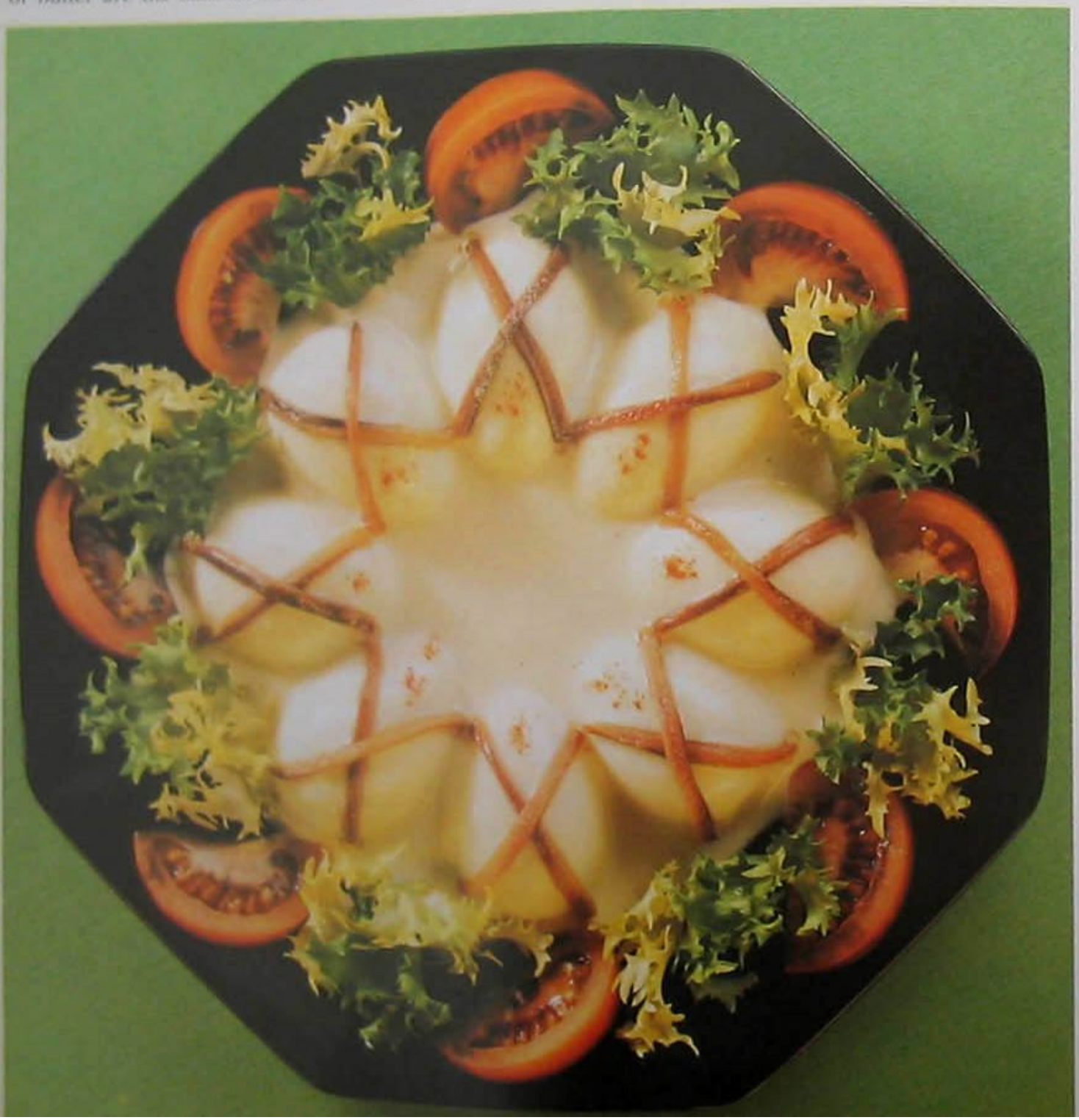
Add a touch of elegance to a meal with a perfectly prepared Béarnaise sauce or a thick, golden mayonnaise. A carefully chosen sauce enhances the flavour of the simplest of dishes.

Hot and cold savoury sauces can make the vital difference to the presentation and flavour of a meal.

The addition of eggs to the familiar butter and flour-based sauces can greatly increase your repertoire. Eggs whisked with oil or butter are the basis of classics such as mayonnaise and Hollandaise. The addition of an egg or yolk will thicken and enrich a sauce even more.

Cooked conventionally, these sauces can be tricky and temperamental, but just as you do not have to stir continually to avoid lumps in the most basic microwaved white sauce — a microwaved Hollandaise or Béarnaise is less likely to curdle and separate. There is no need to bother with a double boiler, constant whisking during microwaving and standing will produce perfect results.

Mayonnaise with Eggs



Mayonnaise

½ min

Standing time: none

3 egg yolks, at room temperature
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
pinch of cayenne pepper
25ml / 5tsp white wine vinegar or lemon juice
275ml / ½pt olive oil

MAKES ABOUT 350ml / 12fl oz

1 Beat together the egg yolks in a bowl with the salt, mustard powder, cayenne and vinegar or lemon juice to make a paste.
2 Warm the oil in a jug at 100% (High) for 30 seconds.
3 Slowly whisk the oil into the egg mixture. Add it drop by drop until it starts to thicken, then add it in a thin, steady stream until thick and glossy.
4 Alternatively, place the egg mixture in a blender, with the motor running, add the oil in a very thin stream and blend until thick and glossy.

VARIATIONS
Aioli (garlic mayonnaise): add a crushed garlic clove to the oil before heating, then discard. Serve with meat or fish, or as a dip.
Russian mayonnaise: add 30ml / 2tbls tomato sauce, a dash of Tabasco and 5ml / 1tsp each snipped chives and chopped pimiento. Serve with seafood or vegetable salads, or prawn cocktail.
Horseradish mayonnaise: use lemon juice instead of vinegar and add 30ml / 2tbls grated horseradish to the mayonnaise.

Cook's notes

For successful results, all the ingredients for mayonnaise should be at the same temperature. If you forget to remove the eggs from the refrigerator, separate and place the yolks in a bowl. Prick them carefully with a cocktail stick and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 15-30 seconds to bring them to room temperature.

Blender Hollandaise

2½ mins

Standing time: 30-60 seconds

3 large egg yolks
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
salt
white pepper
100g / 4oz butter, diced

SERVES 4

1 Place the egg yolks, lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste in a blender and blend until frothy.
2 Microwave the butter in a covered jug at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes or until melted.

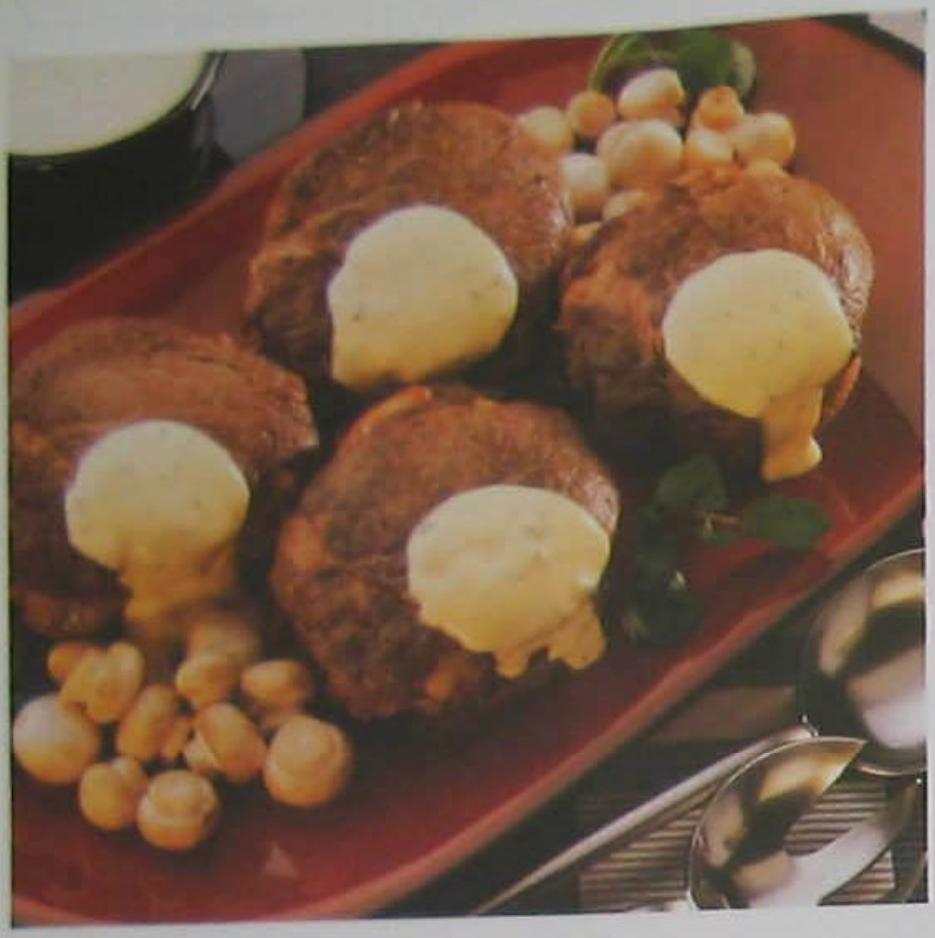
Blender Hollandaise

3 With the motor running, pour the butter into the egg mixture and blend at high speed until the sauce is very thick, smooth and creamy.
4 Pour the sauce into the jug and microwave, uncovered, at 30% (Low) for 1 minute, whisking every 15 seconds or until smooth and thickened. Stand for 30-60 seconds, whisking constantly.

VARIATION
For Mousseline sauce, fold in 150ml / ¼pt very lightly-whipped double cream just before serving the sauce.

How to serve egg enriched sauces

SAUCE	DESCRIPTION	SERVE WITH
Classic Béarnaise	Classic French sauce flavoured with tarragon	Prime steak and grilled lean meat
Blender Hollandaise	Silky French sauce, served warm	Vegetables, especially asparagus and broccoli; poached eggs, fish and seafood
Mousseline	Creamy variation of Hollandaise	White fish or chicken
Egg and lemon	Rich, sharp Greek sauce	Poached or fried chicken, fish or meat; meatballs, stuffed cabbage rolls and other vegetables
Rich velouté	Velvety French white sauce, served warm	Chicken, fish, vegetables, veal, eggs and lamb
Mayonnaise	Classic cold sauce	Green salads, potato salads, cold meats, seafood, hard-boiled eggs



Classic Béarnaise sauce

3¾ mins

Standing time: 30-60 seconds

Without the complication of a double-boiler, the microwave will help you make this classic sauce, perfectly. Delicious with tournedos steaks (see opposite).

60ml / 4tbls tarragon or white wine vinegar
1 shallot, chopped
1 bay leaf
6 black peppercorns
100g / 4oz butter, flaked
2 large egg yolks
salt
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

MAKES ABOUT 150ml / ¼pt

Tournedos Henri IV

17½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

4 small, thick slices white bread
60ml / 4tbls olive oil
4 beef tournedos, each about 4cm / 1½in thick
50g / 2oz tiny button mushrooms
Béarnaise sauce, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Stamp out a 9cm / 3½in round from each slice of bread.
2 Heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add 10ml / 2tsp oil and tilt to coat the base. Press the bread rounds down with a spatula and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, or until golden. Turn the bread over and microwave for 1½ minutes more; drain.
3 Reheat the browning dish at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Add the remaining oil. Add the steaks, press down well and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Turn and microwave for a further 3½ minutes, or until cooked to taste.
4 Arrange the bread rounds on a serving plate. Place the steaks on top, tent loosely with foil and stand for 2 minutes.
5 Meanwhile, stir the mushrooms in to the juices in the browning dish. Microwave at 100% (High)

How to microwave Classic Béarnaise sauce

Combine *the vinegar, shallot, bay leaf and peppercorns in a jug. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, until reduced by half. Cool. Melt the butter in covered bowl at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds.*

Place *the egg yolks in a bowl and strain in the vinegar. Season to taste with salt, then whisk together until frothy. Gradually add the melted butter pouring in a very thin stream, whisking all the time.*

Microwave, *uncovered, at 100% (High) for 45 seconds until the sauce has thickened, stirring every 15 seconds. Stand for 30-60 seconds, whisking constantly. Stir in the parsley until well blended, and serve.*

for 2-2½ minutes, or until tender, stirring twice.
6 Spoon the mushrooms around the steaks. Top each steak with Béarnaise sauce and serve.

Rich velouté sauce

3¾ mins

Standing time: none

A velouté is a basic roux sauce made with liquid other than milk.

40g / 1½oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt hot chicken, veal or fish stock
1 egg yolk
45ml / 3tbls double cream
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
salt and pepper

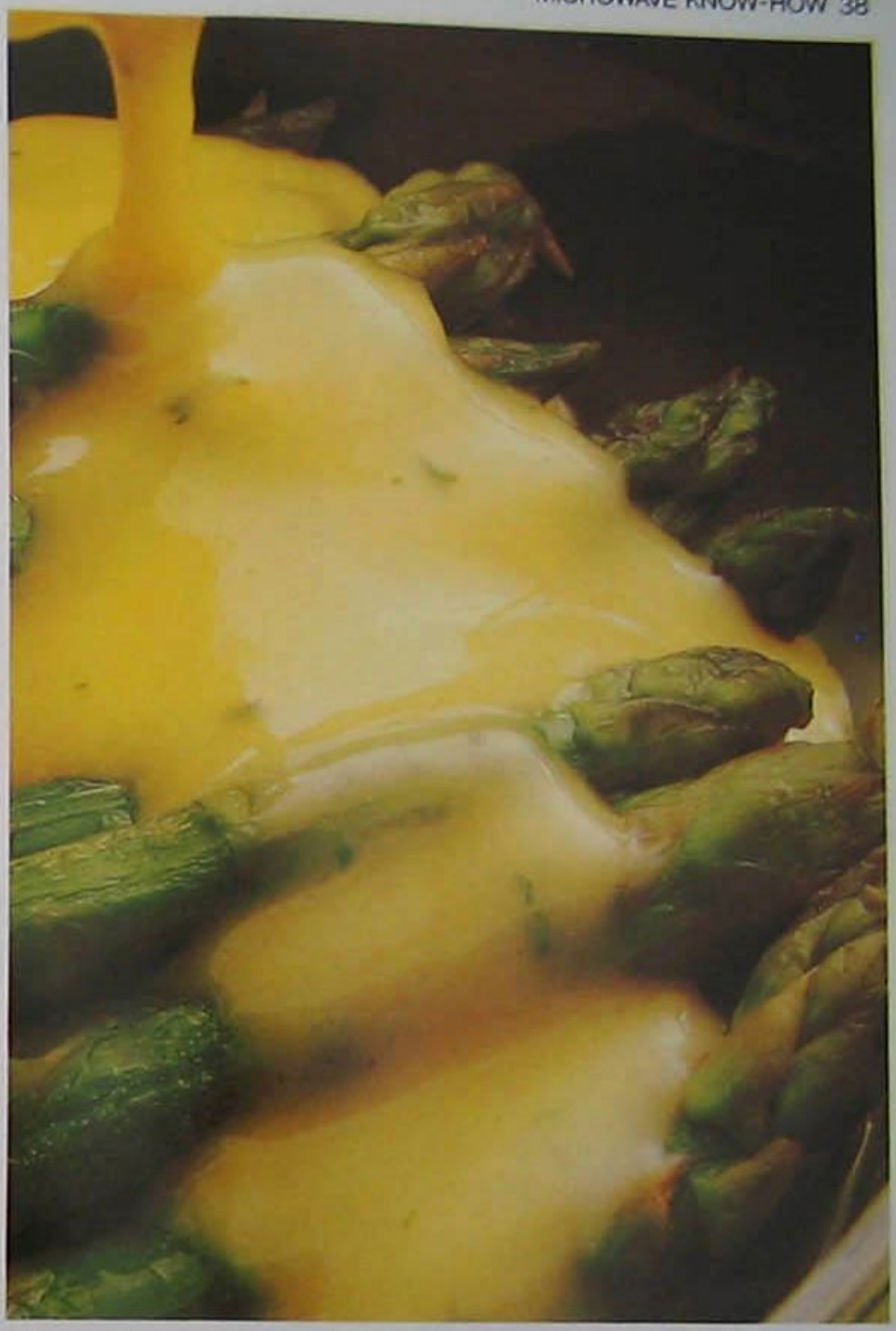
MAKES ABOUT 350ml / 12fl oz

1 Melt 25g / 1oz of the butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Blend in the flour and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute until straw-coloured, stirring once.
2 Whisk in the stock and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring every 30 seconds until boiling and thickened. Cool.
3 Beat the egg yolk with the cream and add to the sauce, whisking constantly. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-1½ minutes, stirring every 30 seconds until thickened slightly. Do not boil.
4 Blend in remaining butter, lemon juice and seasoning to taste.

Microtips

During a short standing time a microwaved egg sauce, such as Béarnaise, will continue to cook and thicken. You should whisk it constantly during this time to avoid it curdling or separating.

If the sauce has thickened to the right consistency at the end of microwaving time, plunge the container into a bowl of cold water and whisk briskly. This will bring the temperature of the sauce down and prevent it overcooking and separating.



Egg and Lemon Sauce

Egg and lemon sauce

5½ mins

Standing time: none

10ml / 2tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls cold water
225ml / 8fl oz hot white stock
2 large eggs, separated
salt and pepper
60ml / 4tbls lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley

MAKES 275ml / ½pt

1 Mix the cornflour with the cold water in a bowl to make a smooth paste. Gradually add the stock, blending well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, stirring every 30 seconds.
2 Meanwhile, whisk the egg whites with a pinch of salt until they stand in stiff peaks. Whisk in the egg yolks, one at a time, with the lemon juice and parsley.
3 Gradually pour on the hot stock, whisking constantly.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3½-4 minutes, whisking three times until thick and foaming. Season to taste and serve.

Farmhouse tea

There's nothing to beat a hearty, farmhouse-style tea to welcome family and friends back after an afternoon in the open air. Follow the Countdown timetable and sit down to a generous spread.

Imagine the fragrant smell of home baking in the air and the table set for a family tea. All too time-consuming, you say, for today's hectic pace. Not any more. There's no longer any need to rise at crack of dawn to get a baking session under way. Just use your microwave. You'll be amazed at the time you save. The total microwaving time for all the dishes on the menu will probably not exceed 40 minutes!

Microwaving also means that you can bake all these tea-time treats on the same day, and then serve them warm and fresh. It is so much nicer to eat baked goods on the same day they are cooked, and so much easier for the cook if this can be done. Remember too, that due to the short microwaving times and the nature of microwave cooking itself, the kitchen remains at its usual temperature. There really is no need to 'slave over a hot stove'.

Wholewheat flour, spices or fruit toppings give microwaved bakes a good colour. That means your farmhouse teatable spread will look every bit as appetizing as if you had baked conventionally. A sugary marmalade glaze makes the Orange Rolls hard to resist. This clever recipe makes good use of packet bread mix — such a good time-saver when compared with conventional yeast dough. When making up a packet bread for microwaving, the dough needs to be slightly moister than is recommended for conventional bread baking. This compensates for the tendency microwaving has to dry baked foods while cooking them.

When making the Orange Rolls, use your microwave to speed up the process of rising the yeast dough as well as the cooking. Short bursts of microwave energy interspersed with breaks for rising will bring the dough to the required volume in a third or half the time it would usually take. Take care not to over-microwave at each rising stage, or the dough will become hot and start to cook instead of the yeast being activated.

Serve this farmhouse spread with plenty of freshly brewed tea and cold milk for the children. Provide milk and lemon to accompany the tea.

Lashings of butter and homemade fruit jam to accompany the breads will turn this afternoon treat into a veritable feast.

RAY DUNS

MENU

Wholewheat Honey Bread
Served warm with butter and jam

Spiced Teabread
A tasty teabread with raisins

Orange Rolls
An upside down bread with a marmalade glaze

Freshly brewed Tea

Ice-cold Milk

SERVES 6-8

Cook's notes

To enjoy teabreads at their best, microwave them all to eat the same day. In the unlikely event of there being any of these baked goodies left over, store closely wrapped in cling film in a cool place for no longer than 1-2 days.

Microtips

To refresh individual slices or servings, place on a plate and cover loosely with cling film. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds per serving. Baked items quickly stale after being refreshed (warmed to soften), so serve at once.

Countdown

In the morning
Prepare the bread mix for the Orange Rolls and rise by microwave, or conventionally in a warm place for about 2 hours. Prepare the glaze, assemble the orange rolls and microwave according to the recipe. Leave to stand and cool, then cover with cling film. Prepare and microwave the Spiced Teabread. Stand, then cool. Cover with cling film.

Half an hour before serving
Prepare the Wholewheat Honey Bread. Microwave and stand. Meanwhile, lay the table, setting out butter, jam and honey, and milk, lemon and sugar for the tea. Boil the kettle conventionally and make a large, strong pot of tea which can be diluted with boiling water. Serve all the baked breads together as soon as your guests are ready for tea.

Spiced teabread

15 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

100g / 4oz plain flour
100g / 4oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon or mixed spice
5ml / 1tsp ground allspice
75g / 3oz butter or margarine, diced
75g / 3oz caster sugar
100g / 4oz raisins
1 egg, beaten
100ml / 3½fl oz milk

MAKES 8-12 SLICES

1 Lightly grease a 900g / 2lb loaf dish. Sift the flours, salt, baking powder, ginger, cinnamon and allspice together several times and finally into a large mixing bowl.
2 Rub in the butter or margarine to resemble fine breadcrumbs. Stir in sugar and raisins.
3 Mix the egg and milk and stir into the dry ingredients, blend to a dropping consistency.
4 Spoon into the prepared dish and spread evenly. Stand on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-20 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 4 minutes. Check to see if the loaf is cooked by pressing the top lightly — it should spring back; otherwise, insert a wooden cocktail stick — it should come out clean.
5 Stand for 3 minutes. Turn out and cool on a wire rack. Serve warm with butter.

Wholewheat honey bread

7 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

This bread is best eaten while warm and fresh, as it becomes dry very quickly. Serve with plenty of butter and extra honey, golden syrup or jam.

225g / 8oz plain wholewheat flour
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 egg, beaten
30ml / 2tbls runny honey
pinch of salt
150ml / ¼pt buttermilk or thin yoghurt
30ml / 2tbls wheatgerm

MAKES AN 18cm / 7in ROUND LOAF

1 Lightly grease an 18cm / 7in round shallow pie dish. Place the flour and bicarbonate of soda in a large mixing bowl. Beat the egg with the honey, salt and buttermilk and gradually mix into the flour. Work the mixture until smooth, then shape into a ball.
2 Spread the wheatgerm on a piece of greaseproof paper and roll the dough in it to coat it all over.

Wholewheat Honey Bread

3 Place the dough in the dish and stand on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 3 minutes. Leave to stand for 3 minutes.
4 Turn out and allow to cool a little on a wire rack before serving.

Orange rolls

9½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

275g / 10oz white bread mix
200ml / 7fl oz warm water*
vegetable oil for brushing
75ml / 5tbls soft dark brown sugar
45ml / 3tbls finely chopped hazelnuts
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cloves
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls orange marmalade

MAKES 12

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Check bread mix packet for amount of water needed.

Cook's notes

When slicing the rolled raw dough, use a floured knife to make clean cuts. Once cooked, the rolls can be pulled apart with forks, but for a cleaner slice, use a sharp serrated knife.

How to microwave Orange Rolls

Place *bread mix in a large bowl and gradually stir in the water. Knead until smooth. Shape into a ball, place in a bowl and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 15 seconds. Brush lightly with oil; stand for 10 minutes.*

Repeat *the microwaving and standing until dough is doubled in size. Punch down lightly and set aside. Mix 45ml / 3tbls sugar with the nuts and cloves. Microwave the butter, covered, at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds.*

Roll *out the dough on a lightly floured board to a 35.5 × 40cm / 14 × 16in rectangle. Brush the surface of the dough with butter and sprinkle the sugar and nut mixture over the top until evenly spread.*

Roll *up dough, starting from one long edge to make a long sausage shape. Cut into 12 slices, using a floured knife. Place marmalade and rest of sugar in a 23cm / 9in round dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute.*

Stir *to melt and cover dish base. Arrange slices in dish: nine in a ring, three in the middle. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 8 minutes; turn once. Stand 3 minutes, then turn out.*

Freezer mince 1

Frozen mince is a favourite standby. With the microwave it is marvellously quick to thaw and can be cooked with lightning speed into a variety of tasty dishes for both family and friends.

Frozen minced beef is one of the most useful items you can buy. It can be turned into such a variety of different recipes that it never becomes boring. It is a perfect freezer candidate, freezing well for up to 3 months.

Thawing mince

Mince is marvellously quick to thaw in the microwave — 450g / 1lb takes under 10 minutes from frozen. The meat can be thawed either unwrapped or in its polythene packaging, provided any metal ties are removed and the bag is pierced. For the best results, thaw at 20-30% (Defrost); if you are in a hurry you can speed up the process at 50% (Medium), but watch more closely. Scrape off thawed pieces during thawing.

Beefing up the flavour
With different herbs and spices you can give a basic meat sauce all sorts of subtle flavours. Thawed mince makes a marvellous base for a pasta sauce, a super topping for tacos or pancakes and good, juicy burgers. Use herbs and spices, as well as sauces to give the meat a good flavour. For extra piquancy, serve the Mince Burgers and Rolled Beef Swirls with a choice of relishes, such as sweetcorn and tomato, or with mango or peach chutney.

Rolled Beef Swirls

How to thaw minced beef

Remove *packaging and place meat in a bowl, or leave wrapped and pierce the packaging. Calculate the thawing time, allowing 8 minutes per 450g / 1lb at 20-30% (Defrost).*

Microwave *for one-third of the calculated time. Turn meat, scrape off and transfer to another bowl any soft pieces, or turn package over. Microwave for second third of the time.*

Scrape *off and remove any soft pieces of mince with a fork or teaspoon. Do the same with packaged meat, after removing wrapping and placing the meat in a bowl.*

Break up *the remaining meat with a fork until in smaller lumps, moving the more frozen parts to the outside and smaller pieces to centre. Microwave for the remaining calculated time.*

Check *amounts over 450g / 1lb during the last third of time; remove any thawed pieces of meat. If patches of meat start to turn slightly grey, scrape off and remove.*

Stand *450g / 1lb meat for 5 minutes, or until the meat is softened but still cold when touched. Quantities over 450g / 1lb should stand for 5-10 minutes, until soft but cold.*

Rolled beef swirls

29 mins

Standing time: 8 mins

450g / 1lb lean minced beef, thawed (see steps, page 1189)
1 egg, lightly beaten
67.5ml / 4½tbls dry seasoned breadcrumbs
45ml / 3tbls sesame seeds, to coat
salt and pepper

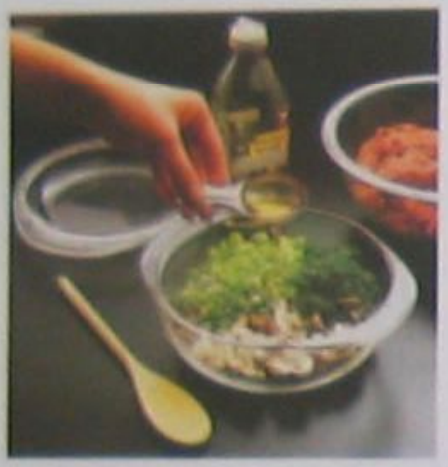
FILLING:
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
4 spring onions, sliced
1 small celery stalk, chopped
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
50g / 2oz Mozzarella, grated
67.5ml / 4½tbls dry seasoned breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan
2.5ml / ½tsp dried mixed herbs

SERVES 4

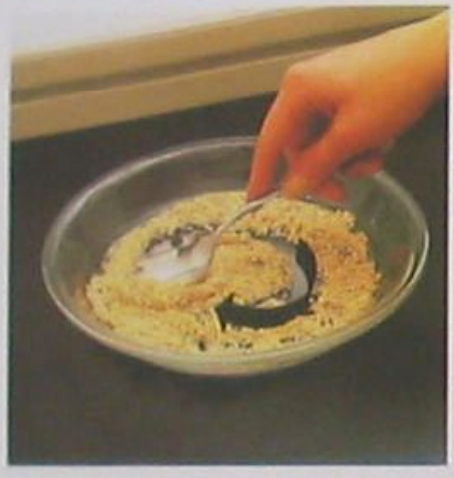
Cook's notes

The time in each time box includes thawing the mince. The standing time includes time necessary to complete thawing the mince.

How to microwave Rolled beef swirls



Mix *beef, egg and crumbs in a bowl. In another bowl, mix vegetables, parsley and oil; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes; stir once. Add rest of filling ingredients.*



Place *a cup of water in cooker, place sesame seeds in a dish and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until seeds are browned, stirring every 2 minutes.*

Pat *beef mixture into a 22 × 12.5cm / 9 × 5in rectangle on greaseproof paper; season. Sprinkle with the filling; season. Use the paper to help roll up tightly from one short side.*

Coat *in sesame seeds and cut in four slices. Place on a roasting rack, tray or plate. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-15 minutes, or until cooked and set. Stand for 3 minutes.*

Minced beef sauce

28 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This is a Bolognese-type sauce, which is traditionally served over pasta, but is equally good with hot baked potatoes. Serve with a green salad.

450g / 1lb lean minced beef, thawed (see steps, page 1189)
1 small onion, chopped
150g / 5oz tomato purée or paste
397g / 14oz can tomatoes
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
125ml / 4fl oz water
5ml / 1tsp dried oregano
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
pinch of dried sage
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the minced beef in a bowl and break up with a fork. Add the onion. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until the meat is no longer pink, stirring and breaking up once.
2 Stir in remaining ingredients. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 16-20 minutes, or until sauce is thick and pulpy, stirring two or three times. Serve over conventionally cooked spaghetti or tagliatelle.

Microtips

Frozen minced beef can be thawed more quickly than given in the steps, page 1189, but the meat may start to cook before completely thawed — so watch carefully. Follow the steps but calculate time allowing 4 minutes per 450g / 1lb and microwave at 50% (Medium).

Mince burger filling

22 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

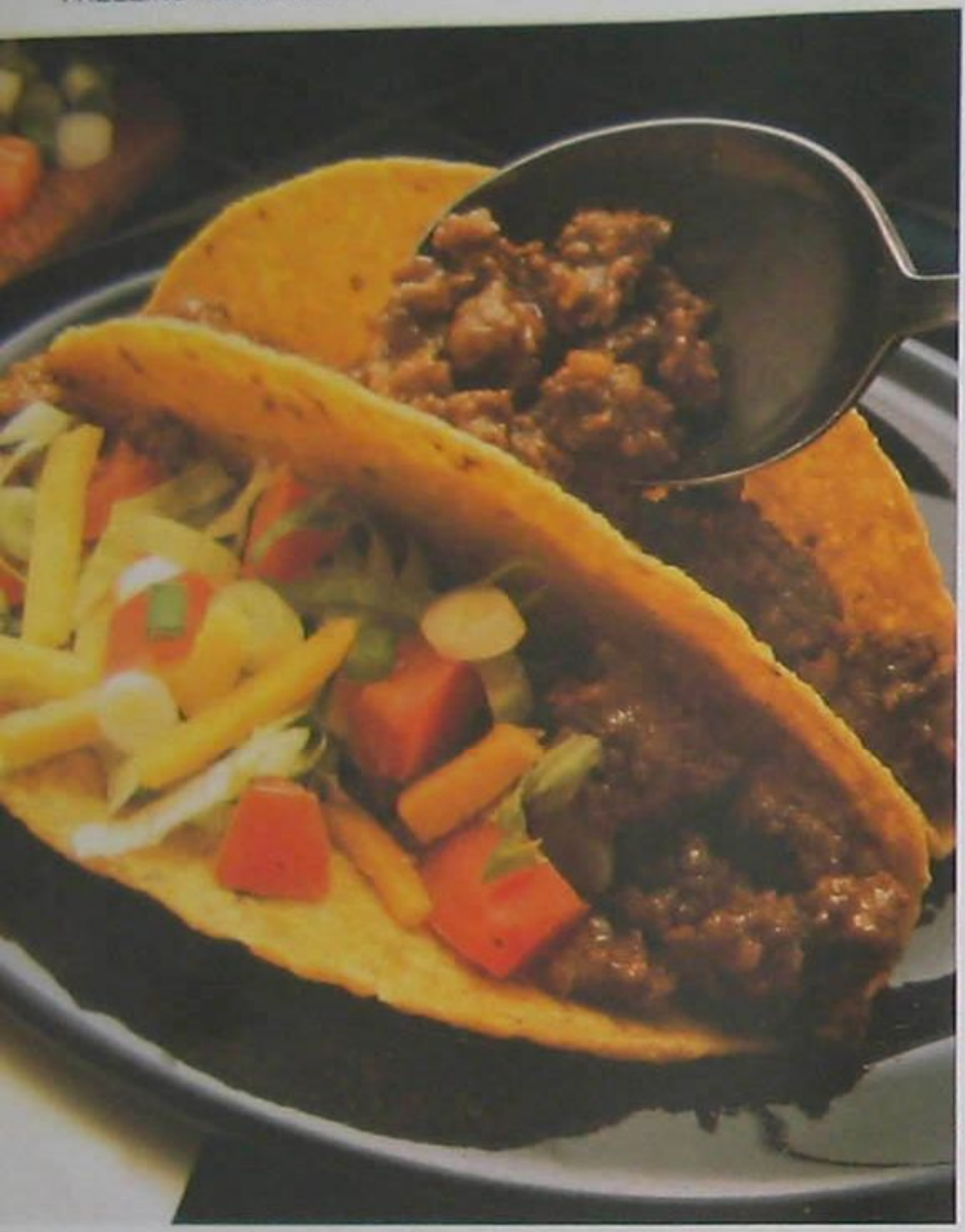
These burgers are really saucy! They are best served on a plate and accompanied with pickles.

450g / 1lb lean minced beef, thawed (see steps, page 1189)
1 onion, chopped
1 pickled dill cucumber, chopped
1 small carrot, grated
45ml / 3tbls tomato purée or paste
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic salt
15ml / 3tsp cornflour, mixed with 30ml / 2tbls cold water
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the thawed minced beef in a bowl and break up with a fork. Add the chopped onion, dill cucumber and carrot. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until the meat is no longer pink, stirring and breaking apart once.
2 Stir in remaining ingredients and microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes, stirring twice until thickened.
3 Serve spooned into hamburger buns spread with mustard, or on toasted muffins. Sprinkle with grated Cheddar cheese, if liked.

Left: *Minced Meat Sauce*
Below: *Mince Burger Filling*



Mince tacos

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Mince tacos make a perfect lunch or TV supper dish.

450g / 1lb lean minced beef, thawed (see steps, page 1189)
1 small onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp chilli powder
5ml / 1tsp ground cumin
75ml / 3fl oz beef stock
dash of Tabasco sauce
15ml / 1tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
15ml / 1tbls bottled brown sauce
salt and pepper

TO SERVE
8 taco shells
2 tomatoes, chopped
2 spring onions, chopped
shredded lettuce
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

VARIATION
This mince mixture can be used to fill crêpes instead of taco shells. Divide it between eight crêpes; roll up the crêpes, place in a shallow dish, and sprinkle with 25g / 1oz grated Cheddar cheese. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes.

How to microwave Mince tacos

Place *the mince in a bowl and break up with a fork. Add the onion and garlic. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until meat is no longer pink, stirring once.*

Stir *in remaining ingredients. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes, stirring twice, or until thick. Spoon into taco shells; top with vegetables and cheese.*

Cook's notes

Good quality, lean minced beef gives the best results in recipes. If you find the mince is a little fatty, drain off the greasy juices after the initial cooking when the meat has lost its pink colour and continue as directed in individual recipes. This ensures more wholesome results.

Slimmer's notes

Just omit the grated cheese if watching the calories and use two pieces of wholemeal pitta bread, cut in half to give 325Cal / 1365kJ per serving.

Bread puddings 1

The fragrant, spicy smell of hot bready puddings is a happy reminder of childhood meals. Revive those memories again with these delicious and quick-to-microwave desserts.

Whether you are catering for a family with a hearty appetite or using up slightly stale or leftover bread, hot bread puddings are certain of a warm reception.

Egg custard-based bread puddings need gentle microwaving to prevent the eggs from scrambling. Do this by standing the pudding in a larger dish containing 12mm / ½in water, or by cooking mostly at 50% (Medium). Colour puddings with spices and brown sugar, or flash under a hot grill.

Old-fashioned Bread Pudding

Old-fashioned bread pudding

10 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

6 large slices of wholewheat bread, crusts removed
50g / 2oz butter, softened
50g / 2oz sultanas or raisins
3 eggs, beaten
45ml / 3tbls caster sugar
few drops of vanilla flavouring
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
425ml / 15fl oz milk

SERVES 4-6

1 Butter the bread and halve the slices. Arrange in layers, butter side down, with the sultanas in a 1.4L / 2½pt dish.

2 Beat the egg with the sugar, vanilla and cinnamon. Stir in the milk and pour over the bread, pressing down well.

3 Stand in a shallow dish of water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes in the cooker. Give the dish a quarter turn and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until the pudding is almost set in the centre. Stand for 5 minutes. Serve the pudding hot.

DAVE KING

Apple brown Betty

12½ mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb cooking apples, cored and sliced
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
75g / 3oz soft brown sugar
50g / 2oz raisins
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
50g / 2oz butter
225g / 8oz stale white bread, crusts removed
60ml / 4tbls water

SERVES 6

1 Lightly grease a 1.4L / 2½pt dish. Mix apple with juice, sugar, raisins and cinnamon.
2 Place the butter in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, until melted. Cut the bread into 6mm / ¼in cubes. Place the bread in the bowl with the butter and toss to coat thoroughly.
3 Arrange half the apple mixture in the greased dish and top with half of the cubed bread. Arrange the rest of the apples on top and add the remaining bread. Spoon the water over the top.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, giving a quarter turn after 3 minutes. Uncover; microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes or until apple is tender. Serve hot.

Apple Brown Betty

Freezer bread pudding

33 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This recipe is useful for freezing, uncooked to thaw when needed as a last-minute dessert. To cook it immediately, microwave at 50% (Medium) for 14-16 minutes, stirring as in the recipe.

25ml / 5tsp cornflour
425ml / 15fl oz milk
60ml / 4tbls soft brown sugar
3 eggs, beaten
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
pinch of grated nutmeg
250g / 9oz wholewheat bread, crusts removed
75g / 3oz raisins

SERVES 6

1 Lightly grease a 1.4L / 2½pt microwave freezer dish. Blend the cornflour with 30ml / 2tbls of the milk. Whisk into the remaining milk with the sugar, eggs, ground

Freezer Bread Pudding

cinnamon and nutmeg.
2 Cut the bread into 2.5cm / 1in cubes and mix with the raisins. Pile the mixture into the dish and pour the liquid over the top. Push down the bread, until it is covered with liquid. Cover, label and freeze for up to 1 month.
3 Unwrap the pudding and place on an inverted plate in the cooker. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 33-35 minutes, or until just setting, breaking up the pieces gently after 8 minutes and pushing the edges to the middle. After that, tip the dish every 5 minutes to allow the liquid to flow around. Stand for 5 minutes.

Freezer notes

Egg and milk mixtures would normally curdle and separate when thawed after freezing. The addition of a little cornflour blended in stabilizes the custard and makes it possible to freeze the pudding and then thaw successfully.

Butterscotch and raisin ring

13½ mins

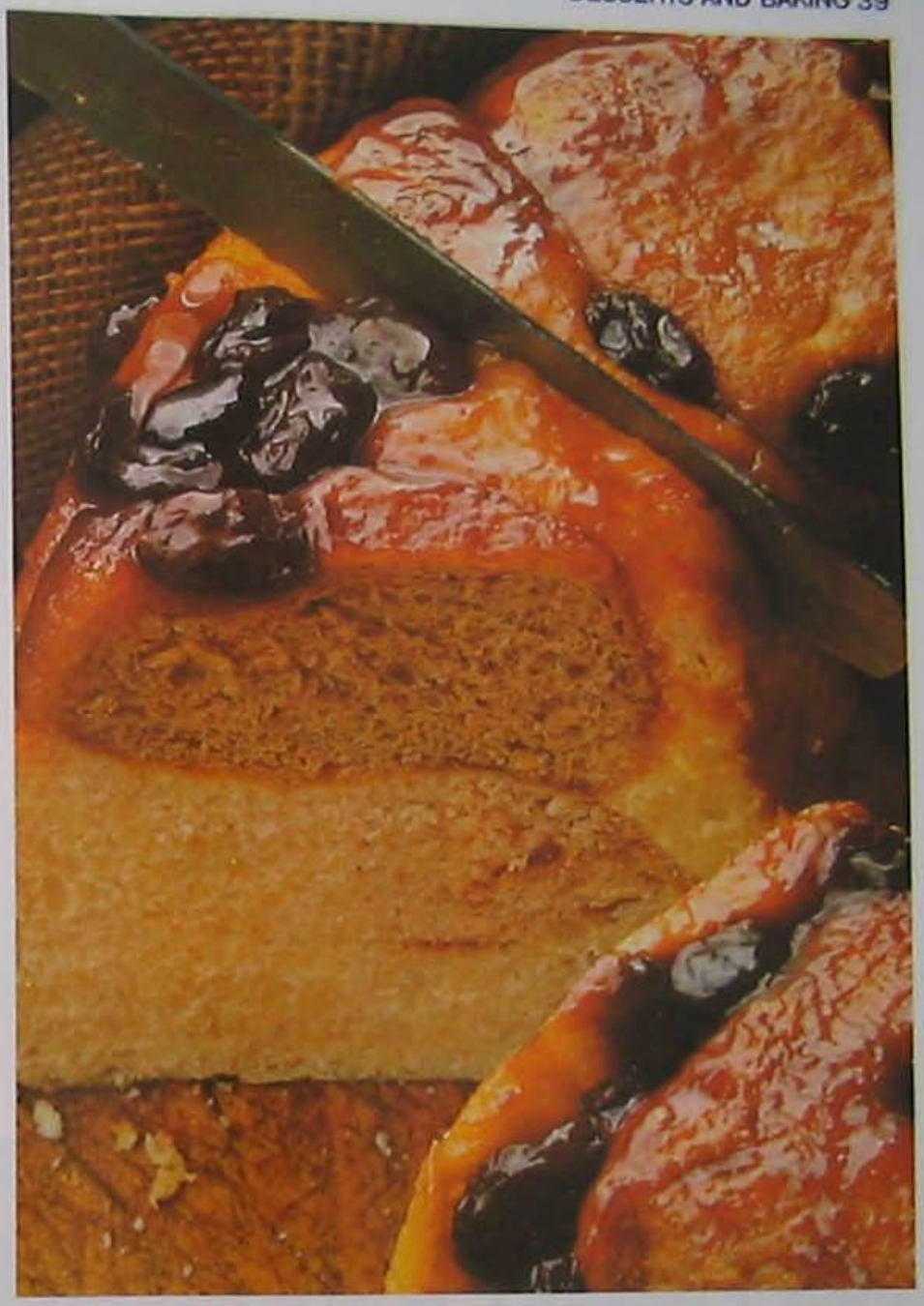
Standing time: 5 mins

It is important that both doughs are ready to cook together. Start the wholewheat dough first and use warmer water than for the white mixture to encourage rising.

275g / 10oz wholewheat bread mix
175ml / 6fl oz hand-hot water
vegetable oil for brushing
275g / 10oz white bread mix
200ml / 7fl oz tepid water
50g / 2oz butter
100g / 4oz apricot jam
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
75g / 3oz raisins

SERVES 8

1 Mix the wholewheat bread mix with the hand-hot water to make a soft, but not sticky dough. Place in a clean bowl and brush the surface of the dough lightly with oil. Cover loosely and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 15 seconds. Stand, covered, for 10 minutes.
2 While the wholewheat dough stands, combine the white bread mix with the tepid water to make a smooth dough. Microwave as for the wholewheat dough; stand.
3 Repeat this process, alternating the brown and white doughs, until they have both doubled in volume. Lightly knock back both doughs and cut each into eight equal portions. Shape into 16 balls.
4 Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, until melted. Mix the apricot jam, lemon juice and 15ml / 2tbls water in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring once.



Butterscotch and Raisin Ring

5 Brush the rolls first with butter, then with the jam mixture. Lightly grease a 1.4L / 2½pt microwave ring mould and arrange half the rolls, alternating brown and white, around the base. Sprinkle with half the raisins. Arrange the remaining rolls on top with the rest of the raisins. Cover and leave in a warm place to double in volume.
6 Uncover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 7 minutes, or until just springy to the touch. Stand for 5 minutes; turn out and cool on a wire rack.

Caramel pudding

15½ mins

Standing time: none

6 slices of light milk loaf or similar light bread
125ml / 4fl oz milk
1 egg, beaten
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
custard or yoghurt to serve

CARAMEL
75g / 3oz butter
75ml / 5tbls sugar
75ml / 5tbls golden syrup

SERVES 4

1 Trim the crusts from the bread and halve the slices diagonally. Mix the milk with the egg and nutmeg and dip the bread slices in it to moisten.
2 For the caramel: place half the butter, sugar and syrup in a 25cm / 10in round, shallow heatproof dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5½-6½ minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes, until golden.
3 Add the soaked bread slices to the caramel mixture and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Turn the slices over and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 4-4½ minutes until browned all over.
4 Mix the remaining butter, sugar and syrup in a heatproof bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once.
5 Arrange the bread slices on a serving dish and pour over the extra caramel. Serve with custard or thick Greek yoghurt.

VARIATION
Cut four small slices of fresh or drained canned pineapple in half and pat dry with absorbent paper, then arrange in a ring around the edge of a plate. After making the second batch of caramel, microwave the pineapple at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until hot. Arrange on the serving dish with the caramel bread slices, then pour the extra caramel on top.

RAY DUNS

Top: *Caramel Pudding (variation)*
Below: *Spiced Bread Pudding*

Spiced bread pudding

9 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

4 large slices medium-cut white bread, crusts removed
45ml / 3tbls currants
150ml / ¼pt single cream
200ml / 7fl oz milk
45ml / 3tbls caster sugar
2 eggs, lightly beaten
pinch of grated nutmeg
pinch of ground cinnamon

SERVES 4

1 Lightly oil an 18cm / 7in soufflé dish. Cut the bread into 2.5cm /1in cubes and mix with the currants. Turn into the prepared dish.
2 Put the cream, milk and sugar in a jug and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, or until hot. Stir well to dissolve the sugar.
3 Whisk the liquid into the eggs and add the spices. Pour over the bread, making sure all the surface area is covered. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8 minutes, or until just set in the centre, giving the dish a quarter turn twice. Brown under a hot grill to give a crisp, crusty topping.
4 Serve the pudding hot with custard or yoghurt.

RAY DUNS

Fruit Teabread Pudding

Fruit teabread pudding

17 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

10-12 slices of fruited teacake, crusts removed
50g / 2oz no-need-soak dried apricots, finely chopped
grated zest of 1 orange
3 eggs, beaten
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
275ml / ½pt milk
150ml / ¼pt single cream
2.5ml / ½tsp ground mixed spice

SERVES 4

1 Lightly grease a 1.1L / 2pt pie dish. Slice the teacake into triangular pieces.
2 Layer half of the teacake in the prepared dish with half the apricots. Sprinkle the orange zest over the top and add the rest of the teacake and apricots in layers, finishing with teacake.
3 Beat the eggs with the sugar. Mix the milk and cream, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, or until just hot. Mix into the eggs with the mixed spice.
4 Pour the liquid over the layers in the dish then microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Press the teacake down into the custard mixture, and stand, loosely covered for 5 minutes.
5 Uncover the dish and give it a quarter turn. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 13 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 4 minutes. Test for doneness — the pudding is cooked when it is almost set but still moist in the centre. Stand for 5 minutes.
6 Brown the top of the pudding lightly under the grill if liked.

Slimmer's notes

To make this delicious pudding less rich, use only 15ml / 1tbls sugar and replace the milk and cream with 425ml / ¾pt skimmed milk. This gives a wholesome 240Cal / 1010kJ per portion and will serve four generously.

Microtips

If you find the pudding is cooking too fast, place a cup of water in the cooker. This helps prevent the custard mixture setting in lumps around the edges by absorbing microwave energy.

Sweet peppers

Vividly coloured, crunchy textured and vitamin packed — sweet peppers microwave beautifully. Serve them stuffed, combined with fish or meat or as a simply splendid salad.

With their crisp, juicy texture and bright cheerful colour, sweet peppers make an excellent addition to stews, casseroles and vegetable dishes. They are also popular filled with a tasty stuffing and served as a dish in their own right.

Green peppers are the most familiar; yellow and red peppers, which are riper and sweeter, are increasingly available and it is sometimes possible to buy pale yellow or white peppers and the deep purple to black ones. Always choose glossy, firm sweet peppers, free from cuts, punctures or soft spots. Those that are relatively heavy for their size, generally have thick, fleshy walls. To prepare, slice off the tops and remove seeds and membrane from inside. Rinse out with cold water.

Microwaving is a marvellous method of cooking sweet peppers, ensuring they retain their vibrant colour and keep their shape. For stuffed peppers, there is no need to blanch the peppers first if filling with a hot stuffing (see Cook's notes, page 1201).

Sweet Pepper Ring Salad

Store peppers in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator or keep in a cool, dry place. Sweet peppers will keep for up to 5 days, except for red ones which should be used as soon as possible. Wrap cut portions tightly and refrigerate; use within 2-3 days.

Microtips

Try canned peppers — pimientos — or frozen mixed peppers. For 450g / 1lb frozen, microwave in a bowl with 60ml / 4tbls water at 100% (High) 6-6½ minutes. Microwave 225g / 8oz pimientos with 30ml / 2tbls reserved juice 1½-2 minutes.

Sweet pepper ring salad

5¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Serve this salad warm or allow the peppers to cool completely before adding the dressing. Use any coloured peppers available.

1 red pepper
1 yellow pepper
2 green peppers
1 small onion, sliced and separated into rings
15ml / 1tbls water
10ml / 2tsp soft brown sugar
6 black olives, halved and stoned

DRESSING
100g / 4oz cream cheese with chives
30ml / 2tbls milk
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley or chives

SERVES 4-6

Slimmer's notes

Add this salad to your slimmer's menu. Omit the brown sugar and replace the cream cheese with medium-fat soft cheese flavoured with herbs; then use skimmed milk in place of milk. This gives just 50Cal / 210kJ per serving.

How to microwave Sweet pepper ring salad

Slice *off the tops and bases from the sweet peppers and discard. Cut away excess membrane and scrape out the seeds. Cut into 6mm / ¼in rings.*

Combine *the peppers, onion and water in a casserole; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir in sugar. Stand 5 minutes.*

For the dressing, *put the cream cheese in a small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds to soften. Stir in the milk until smooth.*

Drain *peppers and onion; arrange attractively on a serving plate. Add the olives. Spoon over the dressing and sprinkle with the chopped herbs.*

RAY DUNS

Scallops with sweet peppers

18 mins

Standing time: none

This dish makes an exquisite dinner party main course and will really impress your guests. Serve with conventionally-cooked long grain rice and a tossed green salad.

1 green pepper, seeded and cut in 6mm / ¼in rings
1 red pepper, seeded and cut in 6mm / ¼in rings
1 onion, thinly sliced and separated into rings
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls water
15g / ½oz butter
350g / 12oz fresh or frozen scallops, thawed (see Microtips)

SAUCE
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls water
150ml / ¼pt reserved cooking liquid
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
½ vegetable or chicken stock cube, crumbled
large pinch of paprika pepper

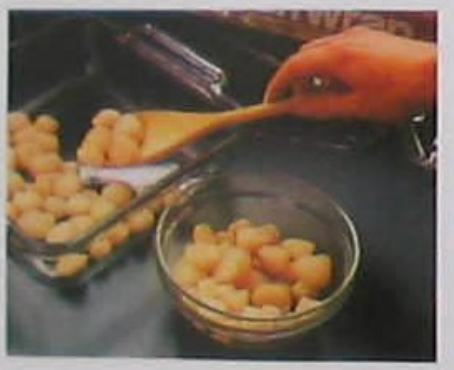
SERVES 4

Microtips

To thaw 350g / 12oz frozen scallops: turn them from the packet into a bowl. Cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5-8 minutes, stirring and breaking apart twice. Let stand for 5 minutes to complete thawing. Drain off liquid and pat dry.

How to microwave Scallops with sweet peppers

Cut *pepper rings in half. Combine all the vegetables with the garlic and water in a casserole. Cover and microwave for 7-9 minutes, stirring twice. Add butter, cover and set aside.*



Place *the scallops in a separate dish. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6-9 minutes, or until the scallops are opaque and tender, stirring once during the cooking time.*

Drain *the scallops and vegetables over a measuring jug. Reserve 150ml / ¼pt of the drained liquid and discard the rest. Add the scallops to the vegetables, cover and set aside.*

Blend *the cornflour with the water in a bowl or measuring jug. Add the remaining sauce ingredients and the reserved cooking liquid. Mix well.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 2-3½ minutes, stirring twice or until the sauce has thickened. Pour over the scallops and vegetables.*

Re-cover *the casserole. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 3-4 minutes, or until heated through, stirring once. Serve immediately.*

Mexican stuffed peppers

10¼ mins

Standing time: none

2 green peppers, cut in half lengthways, and seeded
30ml / 2tbls water

FILLING
50g / 2oz cream cheese
15ml / 1tbls milk
225g / 8oz cooked brown rice
4 green olives, stoned and chopped
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
pepper
paprika

SERVES 4

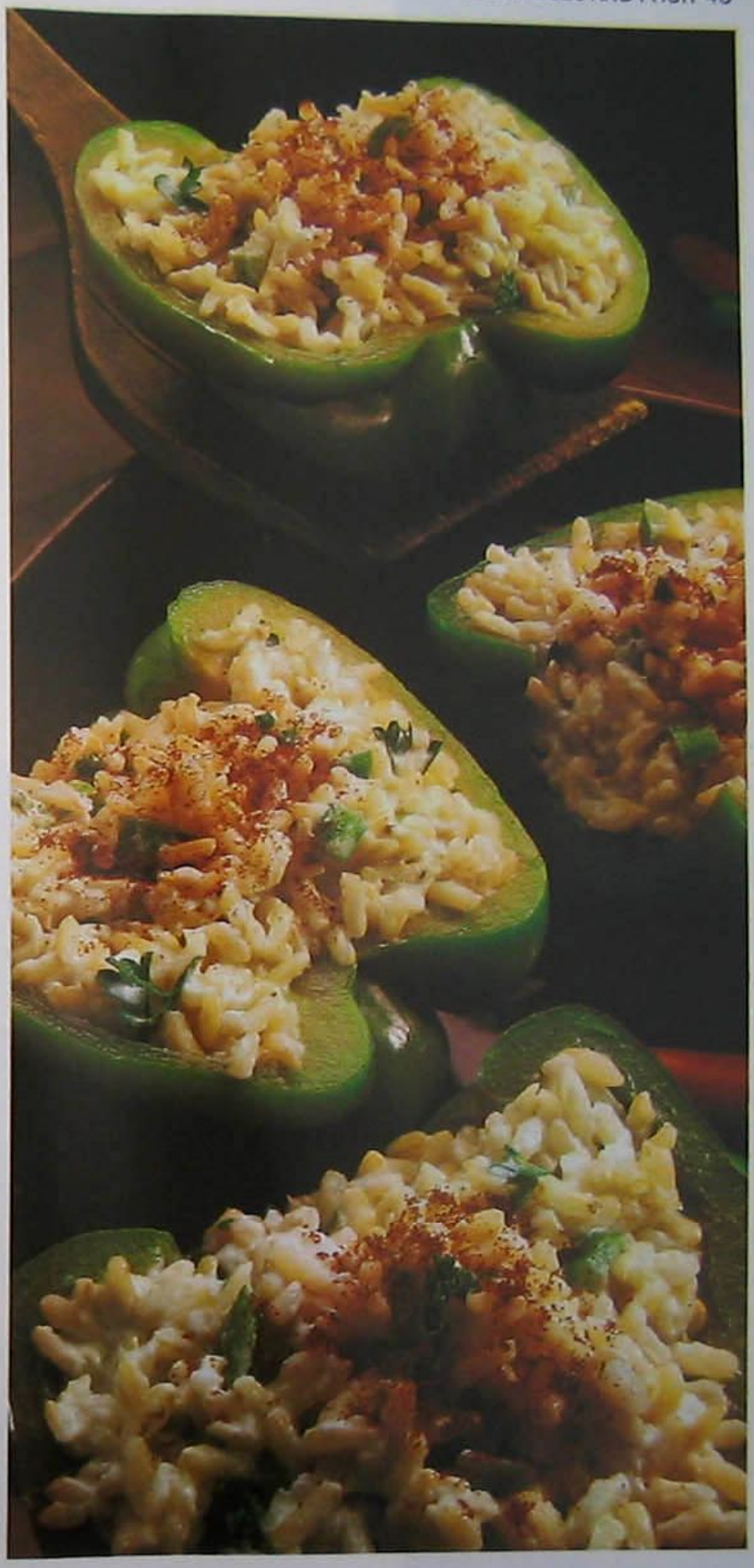
1 Place the green pepper halves in a shallow dish. Add the water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until tender, rotating dish a half turn once. Drain and set aside.
2 Place the cream cheese in a bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 20-30 seconds or until softened. Blend in the milk.
3 Add the rice, olives, parsley and pepper. Mix well then spoon into the pepper halves. Sprinkle with the paprika, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-6 minutes, or until heated through, rotating dish a half turn once.

Slimmer's notes

The brown rice makes this a really healthy recipe. For a slimmer's snack, too, substitute skimmed milk soft cheese and skimmed milk to give 90Cal / 380kJ per serving.

Cook's notes

When peppers are filled with a cold stuffing they require blanching in the microwave before filling. This ensures the peppers soften completely, whereas, filling with a hot stuffing helps soften peppers from the inside while the microwaves penetrate from the outside, so blanching is not required.



Pepper and prawn paella

46 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

The turmeric colours the rice a rich yellow, offsetting the sweet peppers beautifully.

½ onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls water
500ml / 18fl oz hot water
275g / 10oz brown rice
½ red pepper, cut in 6mm / ¼in strips
½ green pepper, cut in 6mm / ¼in strips
½ chicken stock cube, crumbled
5ml / 1tsp dried mixed herbs
2.5ml / ½tsp turmeric
1 bay leaf
350g / 12oz frozen peeled prawns
1 tomato, chopped

SERVES 4

Left: *Pepper and Prawn Paella*
Below: *Beef with Peppers*

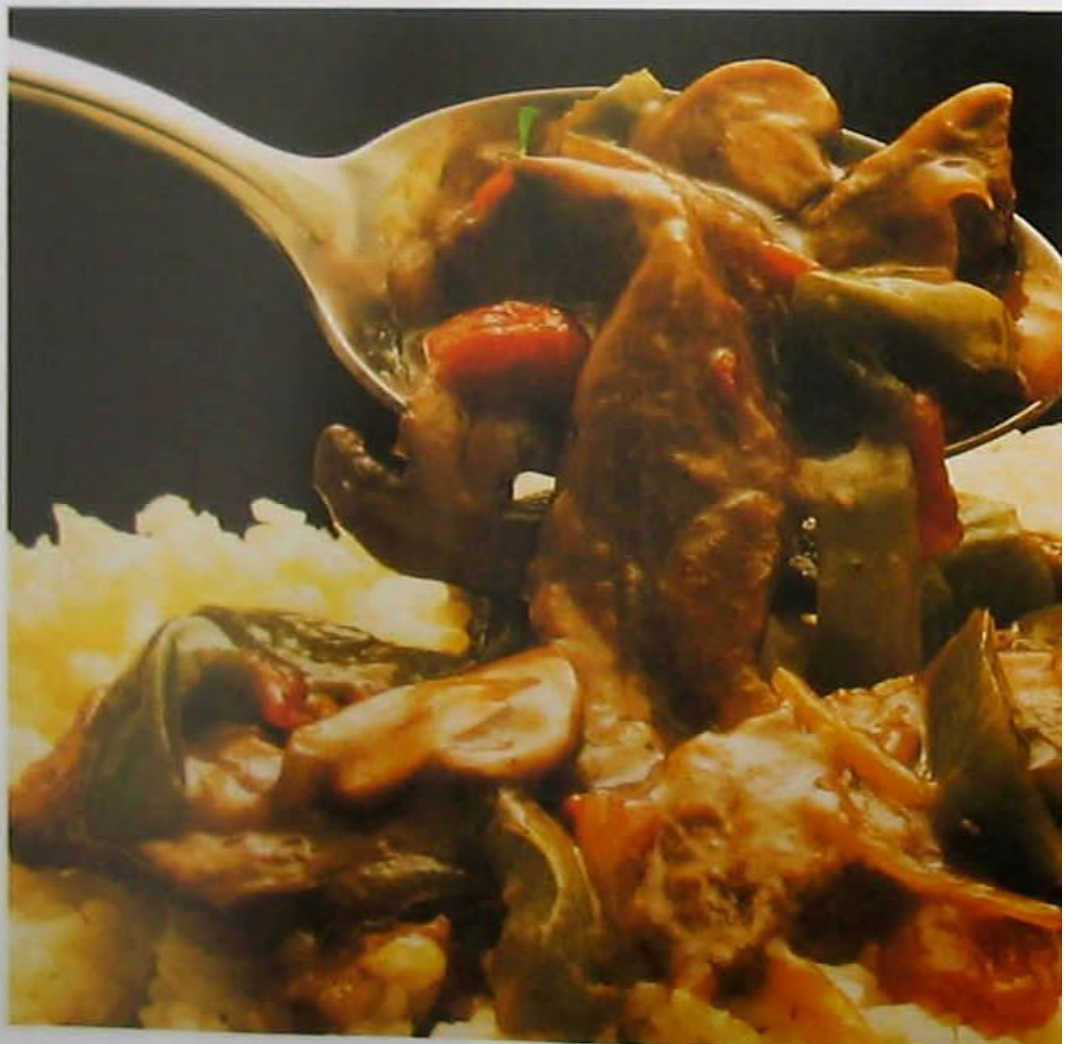
1 Combine the onion and water in a casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
2 Add the hot water, brown rice, pepper strips, crumbled stock cube, herbs, turmeric and bay leaf. Mix well, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
3 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 34-36 minutes, or until the rice is tender and water absorbed, stirring three times.
4 Mix in the frozen prawns and chopped tomato. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-8 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Beef with peppers

40 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 onion, chopped
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
1 large green pepper, seeded and sliced
½ red pepper, seeded and cubed



15g / ½oz butter
700g / 1½lb rump steak, trimmed and cut into 12mm / ½in strips
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
275ml / ½pt beef stock
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
1 garlic clove, crushed

SERVES 4

1 Combine the onion, mushrooms, pepper slices and cubes and butter in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender, stirring once.
2 Toss the beef strips in the cornflour and add to the casserole. Pour in the stock, season with salt and pepper and add tomato purée and garlic, stirring well to combine. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
3 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 30-35 minutes, or until the meat is tender, stirring twice during cooking. Let stand for 5 minutes. Serve with white rice or tagliatelle.

Stuffed green peppers

12½ mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

4 large green peppers

STUFFING
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
175g / 6oz cooked long grain rice
200g / 8oz can whole tomatoes
100g / 4oz canned sweetcorn
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan
15ml / 1tbls chopped pimiento (optional)
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Break up the mince in a large bowl and add the celery and garlic.

Stuffed Green Peppers

Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes until the meat is no longer pink; stir once.
2 Meanwhile, slice the tops from the peppers and remove seeds and pith from inside. Make sure the peppers stand upright, using wooden cocktail sticks inserted through the base, if necessary.
3 Break up mince and stir in the rice, tomatoes, sweetcorn, cheese, pimiento, if using, and seasoning.
4 Fill the peppers with the stuffing. Place in a dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8½-9½ minutes, or until peppers feel softened when pressed with a fork. Stand, covered, for 3-4 minutes. Serve with Speedy Tomato Sauce (see Part 42, page 1144), if liked.

Reducing recipes 2

If you are cooking for only one or two people and your microwave recipes are for four or more, don't despair. Adapting recipes to smaller quantities is easy, with just a little know-how.

Microwave cooking is marvellous if you are catering for only one or two people; it is quick, healthy and very often involves minimal washing up, especially if you cook and eat from the same dish. If you are elderly or on your own and normally find cooking a chore, learn to make your microwave work for you and let home cooking take the place of convenience food. It is cheaper, better for you and you will be amazed at how simple it is.

In Part 16 of Microwave Know-How, some guidelines were given on page 418 for adapting recipes designed for four or more people to suit a single person or a couple. Here are reminders of some of those rules (see the Guidelines)

More guidelines for reducing recipes

- *To halve a recipe, reduce each ingredient by half. Similarly, when reducing a recipe for four to serve one, quarter each of the ingredients. However, always be sure there is still enough liquid to cover rice, potatoes, pasta and any other starchy foods.*
- *When halving a recipe, microwave for approximately two-thirds of the original cooking time. If you are quartering a recipe, microwave for one-third of the original time.*
- *Use smaller cooking dishes for reduced quantities so the food reaches roughly the same level, but allow space at the top to prevent food from boiling over.*
- *If microwaving small quantities, always put a cup of water in the cooker as a safeguard.*
- *Always test reduced recipes to see whether they are cooked a minute or two before the calculated cooking time is up.*
- *Stir, turn and rearrange food during microwaving as often as directed in the original recipe.*
- *Reducing recipes with a high fat and / or sugar content or those which contain alcohol is not recommended as there is not enough food in the cooker to absorb the microwave energy.*
- *Cover food for microwaving as often as directed in original recipe.*

and suggestions for attractive recipes to make just for yourself.

Of course, you may like to make the full amount of a recipe and freeze half for a later date, but if you want to avoid repetition, just adapt the recipes as suggested. This is a boon for families where there is one fussy eater who may not like the same food as the rest of the family — just make a separate dish, while the rest of you enjoy your favourite food! Once you have gained the confidence to experiment with reducing recipes, you will find endless possibilities.

RAY DUNS

Tagliatelle meatballs for 4

13 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz tagliatelle
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
½ red pepper, seeded and chopped
1 onion, chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
200g / 7oz can sweetcorn kernels, drained
2 × 290g / 10.6oz cans cream of mushroom soup

SAUSAGEMEAT BALLS
350g / 12oz spicy pork sausagemeat
75g / 3oz brown breadcrumbs
10ml / 2tsp brown sauce
10ml / 2tsp tomato ketchup or sauce
10ml / 2tsp French mustard
salt and pepper

1 Cook the tagliatelle conventionally while making meatballs.
2 Put the sausagemeat in a large bowl, then mix in the breadcrumbs, kneading well. Add the remaining ingredients and season. Mix until blended.
3 Roll the mixture into sixteen balls. Arrange in a circle on a roasting rack or in a shallow dish.
4 Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 8 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.
5 Combine the pepper, onion and oil in a 2.3L / 4pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until tender. Stir in the sweetcorn, tagliatelle and the cream of mushroom soup.
6 Top with the meatballs. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until hot.

Microtips

If your roasting rack or dish is not large enough to allow you to cook the meatballs in a single circle, rearrange them halfway through cooking, moving those on the inside to the outside of the dish or rack and vice-versa.

Tagliatelle meatballs for 2

10 mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

100g / 4oz mixed green and white tagliatelle
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
½ red pepper, seeded and chopped
10ml / 2tsp vegetable oil
60ml / 4tbls canned sweetcorn kernels, drained
290g / 10.6oz can cream of mushroom soup

SAUSAGEMEAT BALLS
175g / 6oz spicy sausagemeat
40g / 1½oz fresh brown breadcrumbs
5ml / 1tsp brown sauce
5ml / 1tsp tomato ketchup or sauce
5ml / 1tsp French mustard
salt and pepper

1 Cook the tagliatelle conventionally while you make the meatballs.
2 Put the sausagemeat in a medium bowl, then mix in the breadcrumbs, kneading well. Add the brown sauce, tomato ketchup and mustard and season to taste. Mix to blend.
3 Using damp hands, roll the mixture into eight balls. Arrange in a circle on a roasting rack or in a shallow circular dish.
4 Microwave, uncovered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 6 minutes. Leave to stand for 3-4 minutes.
5 Meanwhile, combine the chopped pepper, onion and oil in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until vegetables are tender. Stir in the sweetcorn and the cooked, drained tagliatelle and the cream of mushroom soup.
6 Toss the mixture thoroughly and top with the meatballs. Cover the casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until thoroughly heated.

VARIATION
Use your favourite pasta for this dish: to cook in the microwave see the chart in Part 11, page 307.

Tagliatelle meatballs for 1

6½ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

This is a tasty and nutritious dish for one, which can literally be knocked together in under ten minutes.

50g / 2oz mixed green and white tagliatelle
¼ green pepper, seeded and chopped
¼ red pepper, seeded and chopped
¼ onion, chopped
5ml / 1tsp vegetable oil
30ml / 2tbls canned sweetcorn kernels, drained
½ × 290g / 10.6oz can cream of mushroom soup

SAUSAGEMEAT BALLS
75g / 3oz spicy sausagemeat
20g / ¾oz fresh brown breadcrumbs
2.5ml / ½tsp brown sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp tomato ketchup or sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp French mustard
salt and pepper

1 Cook the tagliatelle conventionally while you make the meatballs and microwave.
2 Put the sausagemeat in a bowl, then mix in the breadcrumbs, kneading well. Add the brown sauce, tomato ketchup and mustard and season to taste with salt and pepper. Mix and roll into four balls. Arrange in a circle on a roasting rack or round dish.
3 Microwave, uncovered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 4½ minutes. Leave to stand for 2-3 minutes.
4 Meanwhile, combine the chopped pepper, onion and the oil in a 0.8L / 1½pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, until the vegetables are tender. Carefully stir in the cooked, drained tagliatelle, the sweetcorn and the cream of mushroom soup.
5 Toss the mixture thoroughly and arrange the meatballs on top of the pasta mixture. Cover the casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, until hot.

Cheesy cod and spinach for 4

23¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 × 85g / 3.75oz frozen cod steaks, defrosted
2 × 225g / 8oz packets frozen leaf spinach
2.5ml / ½tsp freshly grated nutmeg
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
175g / 6oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated

1 Pierce the packets of spinach and place in a large round dish.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, turning each packet over once. Stand for 5 minutes, then drain. Beat half the nutmeg into the spinach and season.
3 Place the spinach in the bottom of a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Dot with 25g / 1oz of the butter.
4 To make the sauce, melt the remaining butter in a covered, 1.7L / 3pt casserole at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in the flour and season with salt and pepper. Gradually stir in the milk.
5 Microwave, uncovered for 3-4 minutes at 100% (High) until the sauce has boiled and thickened, beating with a balloon whisk every minute and at the end.
6 Stir in the remaining nutmeg and 100g / 4oz of the cheese, until the cheese has melted.
7 Place the cod steaks on top of the spinach and pour the sauce over. Sprinkle with cheese.
8 Microwave, covered, at 50% (Medium) for 13-17 minutes.

Cook's notes

There is extra spinach mixture in Cheesy Cod and Spinach for 1 as it is impractical to reduce the quantities. The remainder can be refrigerated for use later as a vegetable accompaniment. To reheat, microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 3-4 minutes. Leave to stand for 10 minutes.

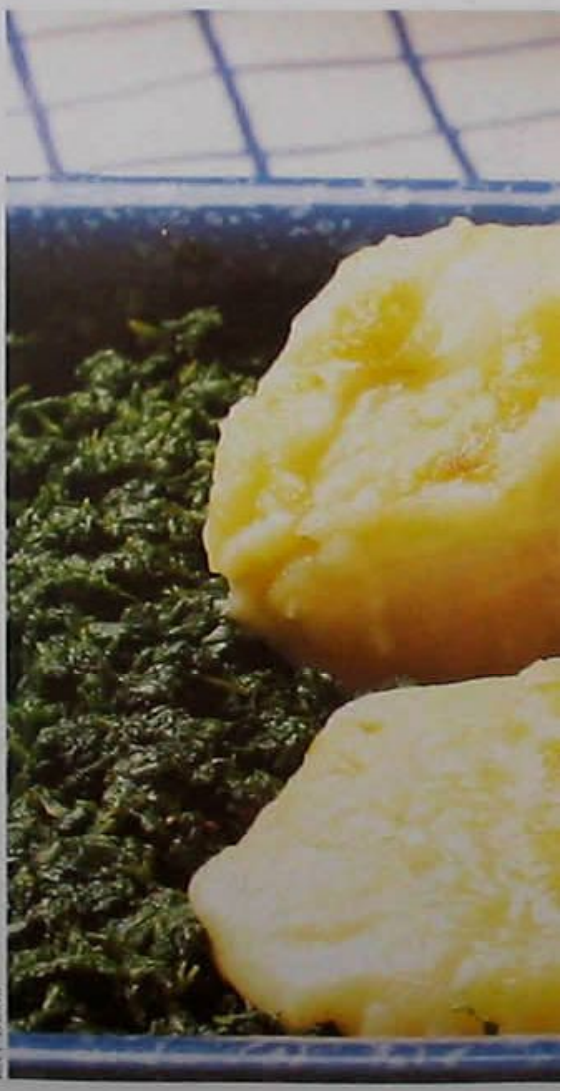
Cheesy cod and spinach for 2

16¼ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

2 × 85g / 3.75oz frozen cod steaks, thawed
1 × 225g / 8oz packet frozen leaf spinach
1.5ml / ¼tsp freshly grated nutmeg
salt and pepper
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt milk
75g / 3oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated
crusty French bread, to serve

1 Pierce the packet of spinach once and place in a suitable dish.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, turning over once. Stand for 3 minutes. Drain, beat in half the nutmeg and season.
3 Place the spinach in the bottom



RAY DUNS

of an 850ml / 1½pt casserole and dot with 15g / ½oz butter.
4 To make the sauce, melt the remaining butter in a covered, 1.1L / 2pt bowl at 100% (High) for 10-15 seconds. Stir in the flour and season with salt and pepper. Gradually stir in the milk.
5 Microwave, uncovered for 2-2½ minutes at 100% (High) until the sauce boils and thickens. Whisk every minute and at the end.
6 Stir in remaining nutmeg and 50g / 2oz cheese, until melted.
7 Place the cod steaks on top of the spinach, pour the sauce over the fish and sprinkle with remaining cheese.
8 Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 9-11 minutes, or until heated through. If you prefer a golden finish, pop the microwaved dish under a hot grill for a couple of minutes. Serve immediately with French bread.

Cheesy Cod and Spinach

Cheesy cod and spinach for 1

14¼ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

1 × 85g / 3.75g frozen cod steak, thawed
1 × 225g / 8oz packet frozen leaf spinach
pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
salt and pepper
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt milk
40g / 1½oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated
crusty French bread, to serve

1 Pierce the packet of frozen leaf spinach once and place in a small dish.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, turning the packet over once. Leave to stand for 3 minutes. Drain, then beat in the nutmeg and seasoning.
3 Divide the spinach between two 275ml / ½pt dishes. Set one of the dishes aside and dot the other with 15g / ½oz of the butter.
4 To make the sauce, melt the remaining butter in a covered 575ml / 1pt bowl at 100% (High) for 10-15 seconds. Stir in the flour and season with salt and pepper. Gradually stir in the milk.
5 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until the sauce boils and thickens. Whisk every minute and at the end.
6 Stir in 25g / 1oz of the cheese until it melts.
7 Place the cod steak on the dish of spinach dotted with the butter.
8 Evenly divide the sauce between the two dishes of spinach. Sprinkle half the remaining cheese over each. Cool and refrigerate the one without fish.
9 Cover and microwave the fish dish only at 50% (Medium) for 7-9 minutes or until thoroughly heated through. Serve immediately.

Summer pork stew for 4-6

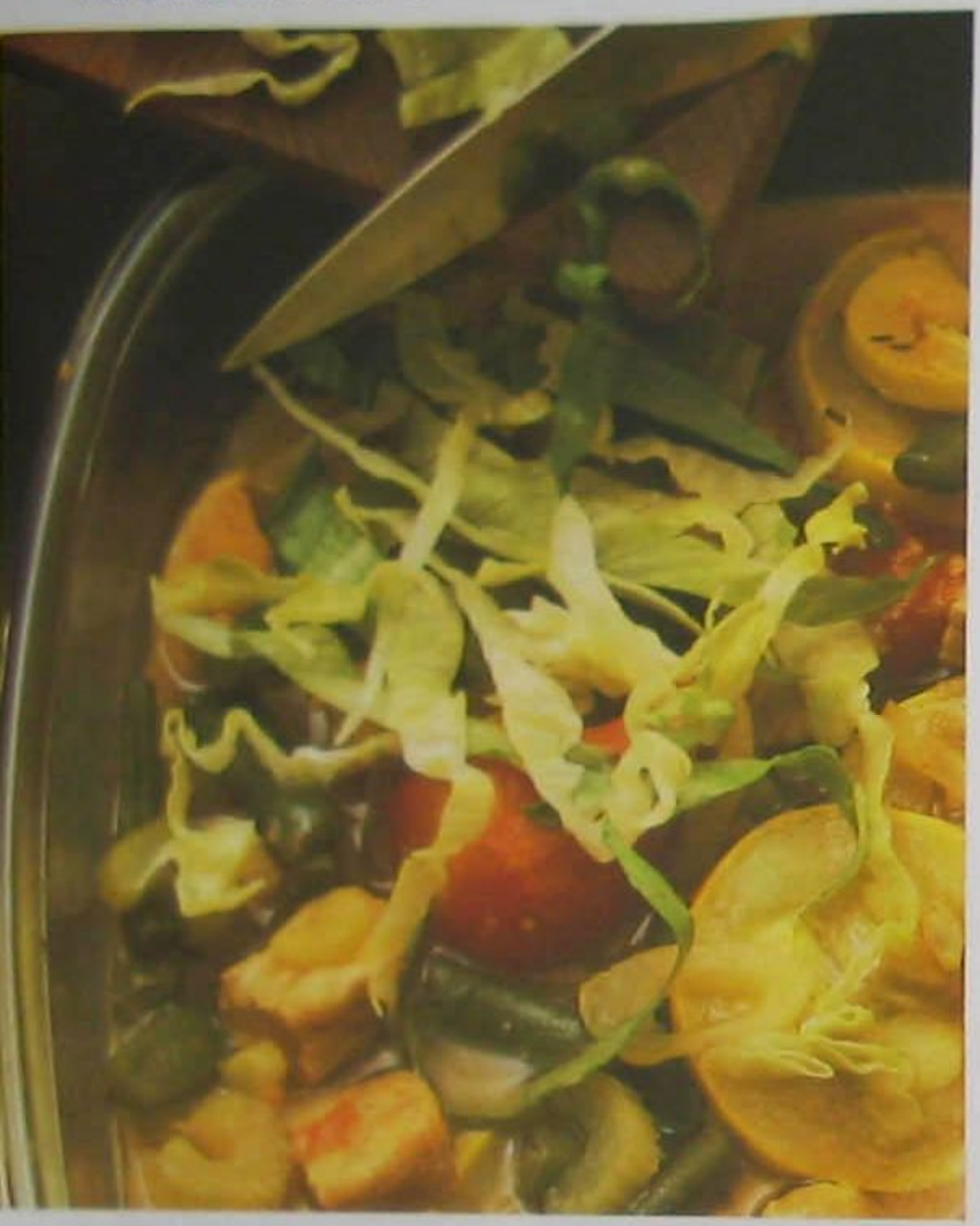
76 mins

Standing time: 8 mins

This light stew will make a change from salads in the summer.

700g / 1½lb boneless pork, cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes
12.5ml / 2½tsp seasoned plain flour
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 large onion, sliced into rings
225ml / 8fl oz hot chicken stock
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
2 courgettes, sliced
225g / 8oz chopped frozen green beans
shredded iceberg lettuce, to garnish (optional)

1 Toss the pork in the seasoned flour.
2 Put the oil into a 2.8L / 5pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, until hot.
3 Stir the pork, celery and onion into the oil. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, stirring once.



4 Gradually stir in the stock, then stir in all the remaining ingredients, except the lettuce.
5 Cover and microwave for 5 minutes at 100% (High), then stir, reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and cook for 60 minutes or until the meat and vegetables are tender. Stir twice.
6 Stir in lettuce, if using, then stand, covered, for 8 minutes.

Cook's notes

Microwaving the Summer Pork Stew at 50% (Medium) gives plenty of time for the flavours from the different ingredients to mingle and will produce really tender final results.

Summer pork stew for 2-3

47½ mins

Standing time: 6 mins

350g / 12oz boneless pork, cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes
7.5ml / 1½tsp seasoned plain flour
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
½ celery stalk, chopped
1 onion, sliced into rings
75ml / 3fl oz hot chicken stock
200g / 7oz can tomatoes
1 courgette, sliced
100g / 4oz chopped frozen green beans
shredded iceberg lettuce, to garnish, (optional)

1 Toss the pork in the seasoned flour.
2 Microwave the oil in a covered, 1.1L/2 pt casserole at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, until hot.
3 Stir the pork, celery and onion into the oil, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, stirring once.
4 Gradually stir in the stock, then all remaining ingredients except the lettuce. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes.
5 Stir, re-cover and reduce the power to 50% (Medium) for 35-40 minutes until the meat and vegetables are tender. Stir twice during cooking.
6 Stir in the lettuce, if using, then stand, covered, for 6 minutes.

Summer pork stew for 1-2

37 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

175g / 6oz boneless pork, cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes
7.5ml / 1½tsp seasoned plain flour
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
¼ celery stalk, chopped
1 small onion, sliced into rings
75ml / 3fl oz hot chicken stock
1 fresh tomato, skinned and roughly chopped
1 small courgette, sliced
50g / 2oz chopped frozen green beans
shredded iceberg lettuce, to garnish (optional)

1 Toss the pork in the seasoned flour.
2 Microwave the oil in a 0.8L / 1½pt covered casserole at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds until hot.
3 Stir in the pork, celery and onion. Cover and microwave for 6 minutes, stirring once.
4 Gradually stir in the stock, then stir in all the remaining ingredients except the lettuce.
5 Cover and microwave for 2½ minutes at 100% (High), stir and reduce to 50% (Medium) for 28 minutes; stirring twice.
6 Stir in the lettuce, if using, cover and stand for 4 minutes, before serving.

Choice chops

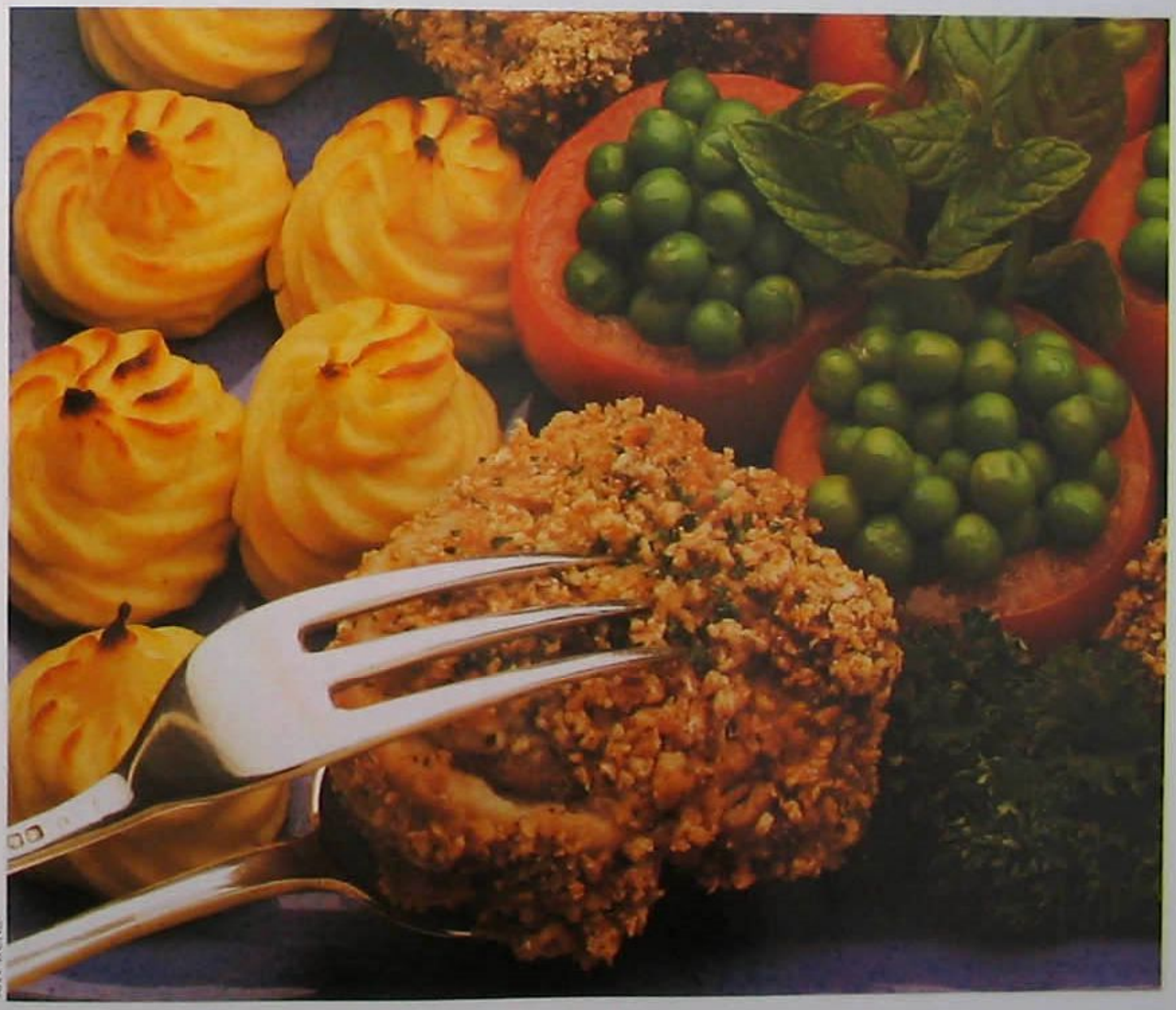
For speedy suppers that look as good as they taste, pork or lamb chops are the perfect choice. Cooked the microwave way, they make a variety of delicious meals.

Chops cooked in the microwave are a great success. With imaginative use of coatings and sauces they provide the basis of many a delicious dish whether for the family or a smarter affair for guests.

Cooking chops in the microwave is easy and can be completed in a shallow dish or, if preferred, a microwave browning dish for a more golden and attractive appearance. Either way, the procedure couldn't be simpler. For a richer looking result chops can be brushed with a browning agent (such as soy sauce, barbecue sauce or Worcestershire sauce) before microwaving. When using a browning dish, always preheat it at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to the manufacturer's instructions. As soon as the chops have been arranged in the dish, press them down so they make good contact with the heated dish.

Standing time is particularly important when cooking meat — it allows time for the chops to cook through without drying out, so giving juicy, tender results. You will also find that a stuffing added to chops, or a breadcrumb coating on chops helps retain moisture well. If cooking on a browning dish, transfer the chops to a plate before leaving them to stand.

Breaded Lamb Chops



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Breaded lamb chops

19 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

This dish can be made to look really special if served with an elegant potato accompaniment. Try the Potato Rosettes (Part 36, page 988), for example, placing them under the grill for a few seconds to brown before serving.

90ml / 6tbls wholewheat breadcrumbs
2.5ml / ½tsp fresh mint, chopped
4 lamb loin chops, 2-2.5cm / ¾-1in thick, trimmed
1 egg, beaten
4 tomatoes
100g / 4oz frozen peas
15g / ½oz butter
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
10ml / 2tsp grated Parmesan cheese
mint leaves, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Mix breadcrumbs and mint. Dip chops in beaten egg; coat with the breadcrumb mixture, pressing on firmly.
2 Place chops on a roasting rack with the meatiest parts to the outside. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes.
3 Cut tops off tomatoes; scoop out pulp. Divide peas evenly between tomatoes. Dot with butter; sprinkle with basil and cheese.
4 Place tomatoes on roasting rack with chops; microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-10 minutes. Rearrange chops and tomatoes. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-11 minutes, or until the chops are done and tomatoes and peas are tender. Stand for 2 minutes and garnish with sprigs of mint leaves to serve.

Microwaving chops in a browning dish

Heat *a large browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or follow the manufacturer's instructions. Meanwhile, trim excess fat from the chops and pat dry with absorbent paper. Arrange in the prepared dish, with the meatiest portions to the outside. Microwave for the times in the chart (below), turning the chops over halfway through cooking time. The timings are for medium-done lamb and well-done pork, but can be varied according to personal preference. To prevent overcooking, remove the chops from the browning dish for the standing time; if left in the browning dish they dry out.*

Microwave times for lamb and pork chops in a browning dish

TYPE AND THICKNESS	QUANTITY	WEIGHT PER CHOP	MICROWAVE COOKING TIME AT 100% (HIGH)	STANDING TIME
Lamb loin chops 2-2.5cm / ¾-1in	2	100-175g / 4-6oz	6-7 mins	2 mins
	4	100-175g / 4-6oz	8-9 mins	
Lamb chump chops 2-2.5cm / ¾-1in	2	100-175g / 4-6oz	6-8 mins	2 mins
	4	100-175g / 4-6oz	8-10 mins	
Pork loin chops 12mm / ½in thick	2	100-175g / 4-6oz	4-5 mins	5 mins
	4	100-175g / 4-6oz	6-8 mins	
Pork chump (boneless) and **spare rib chops** 2cm / ¾in thick	2	225g / 8oz	8-10 mins	5 mins
	4	225g / 8oz	11-13 mins	

Pork chops schnitzel

10½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Using pork in this recipe makes an economical alternative to more expensive veal.

4 pork loin chops
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
pinch of ground cloves
1 egg, beaten
30ml / 2tbls milk
50g / 2oz dried breadcrumbs
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika
10ml / 2tsp dried parsley
22.5ml / 1½tbls vegetable oil
lemon or lime slices, to garnish

SERVES 4

How to microwave Pork chops schnitzel

Remove *the bones and excess fat from the pork chops, then beat each one out to a thickness of 6mm / ¼in, using a meat mallet or rolling pin.*

Sift *the flour on to a sheet of non-stick baking or greaseproof paper. Add salt, pepper and ground cloves. Mix ingredients together well.*

Beat *the egg and the milk together in a bowl. Mix the breadcrumbs, paprika and parsley together on another sheet of paper.*

Coat *the boneless chops with seasoned flour, then dip each one in the beaten egg and coat all over with the breadcrumbs. Set aside.*

Heat *a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or follow maker's directions. Add oil; swirl over base of dish. Arrange chops in dish.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 2 minutes; turn. Microwave 3½-7 minutes until tender. Remove from dish. Stand for 5 minutes; garnish.*

Stuffed pork chops

17 mins

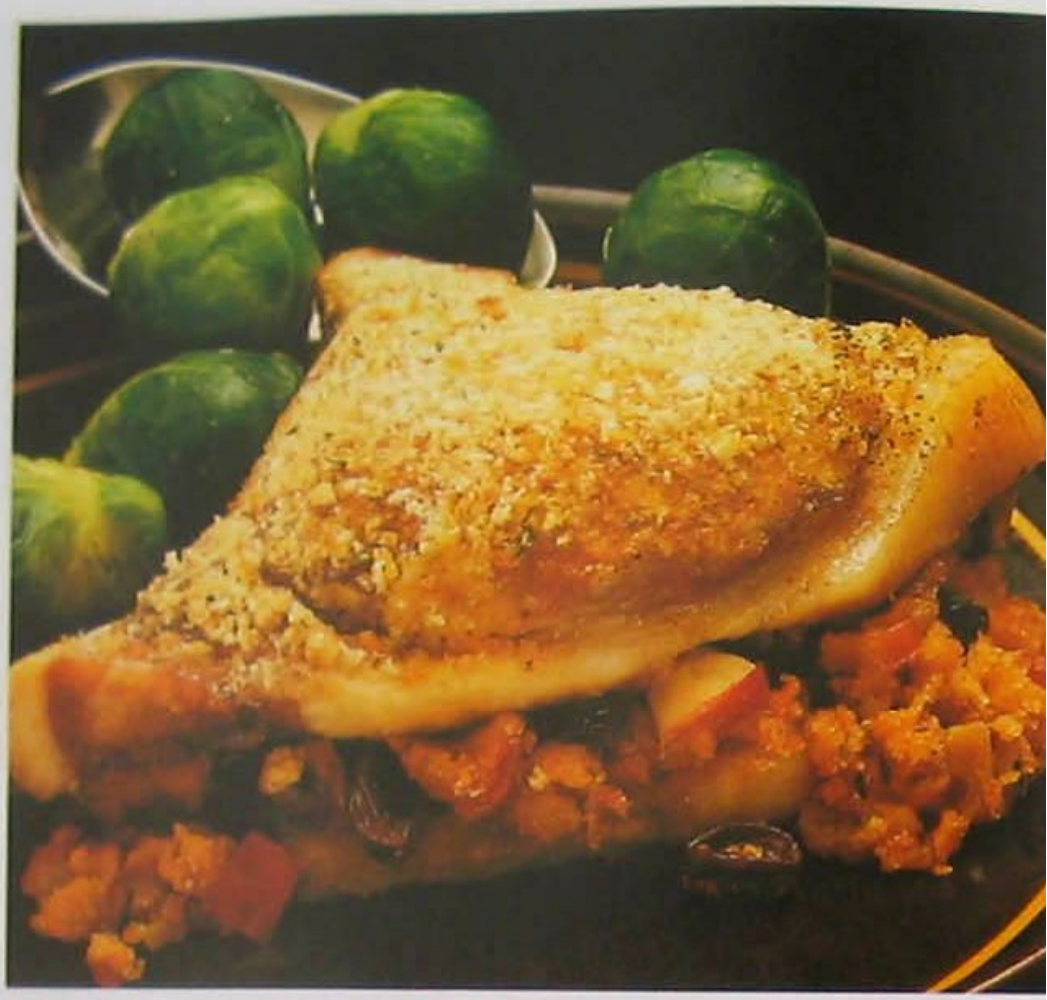
Standing time: 5 mins

4 boneless pork loin chops, 2cm / ¾in thick, trimmed
1 red dessert apple, cored but unpeeled and diced
37.5ml / 2½tbls raisins
finely grated zest of 1 orange
pinch of ground cinnamon
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz dried breadcrumbs
10ml / 2tsp soft brown sugar
225g / 8oz frozen Brussels sprouts, thawed (see Microtips)

SERVES 4

Microtips

To thaw Brussels sprouts in the microwave: put 225g / 8oz frozen sprouts in a bowl with 30ml / 2tbls water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once. Drain well.



How to microwave Stuffed pork chops

Split *chops to give 8 slices. Mix apple, raisins, orange zest, cinnamon and butter. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes until apple is soft. Add half breadcrumbs and all the sugar. Divide between chops and cover with another slice. Secure with wooden cocktail sticks. Coat with breadcrumbs. Arrange on roasting rack in a dish.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Place thawed sprouts in a roasting bag and secure with elastic band; prick to make steam vents. Put parcel in centre of rack. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-16 minutes, or until chops are no longer pink; turn over once keeping meatiest portions to the outside. Stand 5 minutes.*

Stuffed Pork Chops

Barbecue-style lamb chops

14½ mins

Standing time: 2 mins

½ onion, chopped
4 lamb loin chops, 2cm / ¾in thick, trimmed
150ml / ¼pt tomato sauce
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
large pinch of allspice

SERVES 4

1 Microwave onion in a shallow dish, covered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes. Arrange chops on top.
2 Mix remaining ingredients and spoon half over chops. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, then 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes.
3 Drain off fat; turn. Pour over remaining sauce. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-8 minutes. Cover; stand for 2 minutes.

Crumb-coated pork chops

7 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

60ml / 4tbls dry brown or white breadcrumbs
pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp garlic or onion salt
4 pork chops, 12mm / ½in thick, trimmed
green pepper rings, to garnish

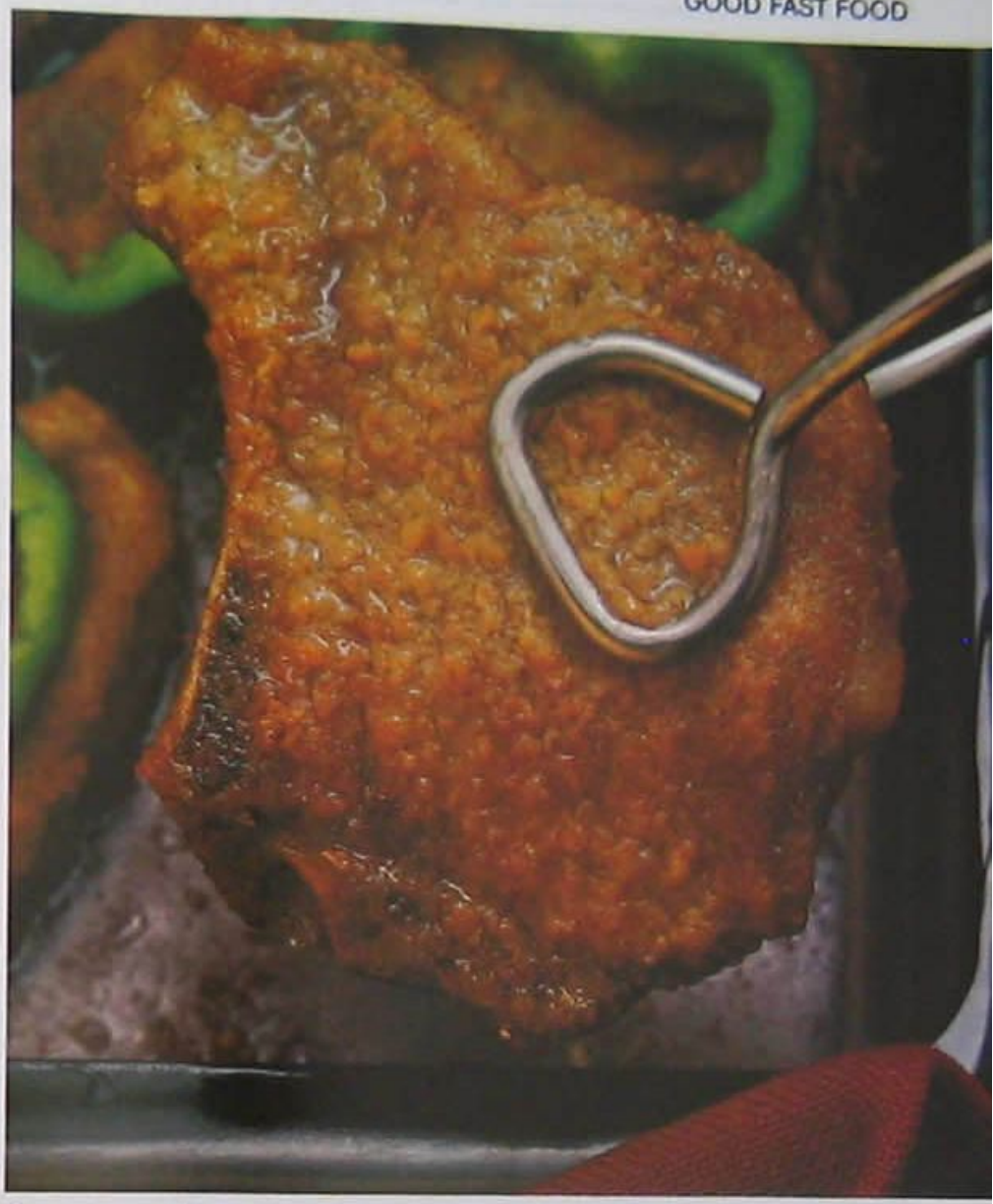
SERVES 4

VARIATION

Other herbs and spices can be substituted in the crumb coating. By adding herbs such as oregano and basil with some grated Parmesan cheese you can have a meal with an Italian flavour. Curry powder and paprika or turmeric will make an interesting Indian variation.

Cook's notes

Although coated chops are rearranged during microwaving, they should not be turned over, otherwise the breadcrumb coating on the top side of the chop would absorb the juices in the dish and become soggy. Drain off juices before leaving to stand.



How to microwave Crumb-coated pork chops

Place *the dry breadcrumbs, pepper to taste and garlic or onion salt in a polythene bag and shake well to mix. Add chops and shake well until evenly coated with the breadcrumb mixture.*

Arrange *the chops in a 20cm / 8in square, shallow dish, with the meatiest portions to the outside of the dish. Cover chops with a sheet of non-stick baking paper.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes; rearrange. Microwave, uncovered, for 5-8 minutes or until the meat is no longer pink. Stand for 5 minutes. Garnish with green pepper.*

STAR RECIPE

Apricot torte

This luscious layered cake, sandwiched together with boozy apricot jam and decorated with a wickedly rich chocolate frosting, makes a tempting treat for dessert, at coffee or tea-time.

With the help of the microwave, you can cook this fabulous cake in under 10 minutes — it's so easy — plus the necessary time taken for cooling and chilling. For easier mixing the butter is first softened in the microwave before being beaten with the sugar and eggs until the mixture becomes light and fluffy.

When folding the sifted flour and baking powder into the creamed butter mixture, use a large metal spoon, and lightly cut through until evenly combined.

Remember that a cake cooked in your microwave will look paler (even though it is perfectly cooked) than you are accustomed to when cooked in the conventional way. Standing time is a crucial part of the microwaving process — it allows the cake mixture time to cook in the centre, without overcooking at the edges.

A microwaved cake is ready to be removed from the cooker when it shrinks away from the sides of the dish. You can also test by inserting a wooden cocktail stick into the centre of the cake — if it comes out clean, the cake is 'done'. (Do not put the stick into any moist spots which form on the surface of the cake.) Alternatively, press the centre of cake gently with the fingertips — it should be springy.

Brandied apricot torte

7¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

The timing given includes making the Brandied Frosting.

100g / 4oz butter
100g / 4oz caster sugar
2 eggs
175g / 6oz plain flour, sifted
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder, sifted
45ml / 3tbls milk

FILLING AND DECORATION
275g / 10oz apricot jam
15ml / 1tbls apricot brandy
1 quantity Brandied Frosting (see recipe, below)
3 slices canned apricot (optional)

SERVES 8

Brandied frosting

1 min

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
15ml / 1tbls apricot brandy
15ml / 1tbls golden syrup
50g / 2oz plain chocolate

1 Place the butter, apricot brandy and golden syrup in a bowl. Cover with a lid and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes or until the butter has melted and the mixture just comes to the boil.
2 Break up the chocolate and add to the mixture; stir until melted.
3 Cool the frosting until warm and of a spreading consistency before using.

How to microwave Brandied apricot torte

Line *the base of a 22 × 12cm / 8½ × 4½in, and 7.5cm / 3in deep loaf dish with greased greaseproof paper. Put the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 seconds or until softened. Add the sugar and eggs and beat until fluffy.*

Fold *in sifted flour and baking powder, then fold in milk. Turn into prepared dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes. Cover with absorbent paper and stand for 5 minutes. Remove from dish and peel off paper. Cool on wire rack.*

Place *apricot jam in a medium bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes; stir once. Sieve into a bowl, then add the brandy; stir well. Cut cake into three equal layers. Place bottom layer on a plate and spread with 30ml / 2tbls apricot mixture.*

Place *the middle layer of cake on top and spread with another 30ml / 2tbls apricot mixture. Finally, cover with the top layer of cake. Carefully coat the top and sides of cake with the remaining apricot mixture. Cover loosely and chill for 1 hour.*

Cook's notes

This cake keeps successfully for up to 1-2 days, provided it is stored in an airtight tin. As with most cakes, however, it is best when fresh.

Cool *the prepared Brandied Frosting (see recipe) until warm and of a spreading consistency, then use to coat the top and sides of cake, spreading it back and forth along length of cake to give a decorative effect. Decorate with apricot slices, if liked. Chill until firm.*

Microwaving duck

Deliciously tender duck, fruitily stuffed, glazed or garnished is the ideal choice for a special occasion meal — and it cooks to perfection in the microwave.

Duck is surprisingly simple and marvellously quick to microwave. It will emerge from the cooker as brown and crispy as if it had been cooked conventionally and will be so succulent that you may never again use any other cooking method!

Since duck has a thick layer of fat under the skin, it is best microwaved at a high setting so that most of this fat will be released and drain away. The fat actually protects the flesh so that it stays moist and succulent, despite the speed of microwave cooking.

Place the bird on a roasting rack set in a large dish to catch the fat as it drains away. Discard the fat each time you turn or baste the bird, or the dish will quickly fill up and overflow.

A glaze, which adds flavour and colour, can be brushed over the duck before and during cooking. Any extra glaze, together with the duck juices, can be served separately as a sauce.

Marmalade Roast Duck

RAY DUNS

Marmalade roast duck

36½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2.3kg / 5lb oven-ready duck,
1 onion, quartered

GLAZE
60ml / 4tbls bitter orange marmalade
60ml / 4tbls dry white wine
salt
black pepper

SERVES 4

Discard *fat from inside body cavity and put in onion and neck from giblets. Secure flaps of skin with wooden cocktail sticks. Place duck, breast side down, on roasting rack set in a large dish.*

Microwave *the duck at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Drain off the fat, turn the duck, breast side up and brush with half the remaining glaze. Microwave at 100% (High) for another 15 minutes.*

Plum duck

39 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2.3kg / 5lb oven-ready duck
2 celery stalks, thickly sliced

GLAZE
75ml / 5tbls plum conserve or jam
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
30ml / 2tbls red wine or water
2.5ml / ½tsp ground allspice
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced

SERVES 4

Mix *the marmalade, wine and seasoning in a small bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Stir well, then brush about one-third of the glaze over the duck, coating evenly.*

Drain *off the excess fat. Keep the duck breast side up and brush with the remaining glaze. Give the dish a half turn and microwave for a further 10-15 minutes, until duck is crisp and golden brown.*

1 Make the glaze: mix the plum conserve with the lemon juice, wine or water and allspice. Stir in mushrooms, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes.
2 Weigh the duck and calculate cooking time, allowing 7-8 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Place celery inside duck and secure skin flap over body and at neck with wooden cocktail sticks.
3 Place bird, breast side down, on a roasting rack set in a large casserole. Glaze and microwave the duck following steps, 2, 3 and 4 and 5 below but leaving sufficient glaze for serving.
4 Stand duck, covered tightly with foil, shiny side in, for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the remaining glaze at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes. Serve with duck.

Microtips

Do not eat duck too rare. If meat is red after cooking, or juices are pink, microwave for 2-3 minutes more, then test again.

Cook's notes

If you have no microwave roasting rack, place an upturned saucer in a deep dish. Place duck on saucer; fat will drain away as it cooks.

Test *duck is cooked by piercing the thickest part of the thigh with a sharp knife; meat should be brown and the juices clear. Transfer to a warmed dish, cover with foil, shiny side in. Stand for 5 minutes.*

Duck with cherry glaze

37 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2.3kg / 5lb oven-ready duck
1 onion, quartered
1 celery stalk, thickly sliced
parsley, lemon slices, lettuce leaves, to garnish

GLAZE
410g / 14½oz can stoned black cherries
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls red wine
30ml / 2tbls runny honey
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
pinch of ground ginger
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Weigh the duck and calculate cooking time, allowing 7-8 minutes per 450g / 1lb.
2 Place onion and celery in the body cavity of the duck and secure flaps of skin with wooden cocktail sticks.
3 Prepare the glaze: drain the cherries, reserving 75ml / 3fl oz of syrup. Cut the cherries in half and set aside. Blend the cornflour with the reserved syrup, wine, honey, mustard, ginger and seasoning. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until slightly thickened, stirring once.
4 Place the duck, breast side down, on a roasting rack set inside a large dish. Brush with a little of the glaze. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes of the calculated cooking time. Give the duck a quarter turn, and turn it breast side up. Drain off the collected fat and brush the bird generously with more glaze.
5 Microwave the duck for remaining cooking time, draining away the fat and basting the duck once more, leaving sufficient glaze for serving as a sauce.
6 When cooked, transfer the bird to a warmed serving plate. Cover loosely with foil, shiny side in, and stand for 5 minutes.
7 Add the cherries to the remaining glaze and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until hot. Pour the glaze over the duck, garnish and serve.

VARIATIONS
Gingered pineapple glaze: substitute 227g / 8oz can pineapple pieces for the cherries and 60ml / 4tbls dry sherry for the wine and honey; omit the mustard. Garnish duck with shredded spring onions.

Port and cranberry glaze: blend the cornflour with zest and juice of 1 orange, 30ml / 2tbls demerara sugar and 150ml / ¼pt ruby port. Add 225g / 8oz cranberries, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes. Stir, brush sparingly over duck.

Peachy duck

39 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2.3kg / 5lb oven-ready duck
1 onion, quartered
1 celery stalk, thickly sliced

GLAZE
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
425g / 15oz can peach slices, drained, with syrup reserved
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
15ml / 1tbls brown sugar
7.5ml / 1½tsp French mustard
1.5ml / ¼tsp curry powder
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Blend the cornflour with the reserved syrup; add the remaining glaze ingredients except the peaches. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until thickened, stirring twice.
2 Weigh the duck and calculate cooking time, allowing 7-8 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Place onion and celery in body cavity of the duck and secure the flaps of skin with cocktail sticks.
3 Place the duck, breast side down, on a roasting rack set in a large casserole dish. Brush with a little glaze. Microwave at 100% (High) according to the calculated

Duck with Cherry Glaze

DAVE KING

time, following steps 2, 3, 4 and 5 on page 1217, but reserving a little glaze for serving.

4 While the duck is standing, add the peach slices to the remaining glaze. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes or until hot. Pour over the duck just before serving.

VARIATION

Apricot duck: substitute some apricot halves for the peaches and use four green cardamom pods, 1 cinnamon stick and 1 bay leaf instead of the mustard and curry powder in the glaze.

Cook's notes

The body cavity of a duck is relatively large and some pieces of onion and celery will help it keep its shape. If you like, place the neck from the giblets in the cavity as well; this will add extra flavour to the meat juices. After cooking, skim off the fat and add the juices to any remaining glaze to make a tasty sauce. This can be poured over the duck or served as a sauce separately.

Citrus duck

38 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2.3kg / 5lb oven-ready duck
1 onion, quartered
1 cinnamon stick

GLAZE

pared zest of 1 lemon
pared zest of 1 lime
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
30ml / 2tbls runny honey
50ml / 2fl oz medium sherry
150ml / ¼pt duck or chicken stock

GARNISH

1 lemon, sliced
1 lime, sliced
watercress sprigs

SERVES 4

1 Make the glaze: cut the lemon and lime zest into very fine strips. Blend the cornflour with the lemon juice; add the honey, sherry, stock and citrus zest.

2 Microwave the glaze at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until

slightly thickened, stirring once.

3 Weigh duck; calculate cooking time, allowing 7-8 minutes per 450g / 1lb. Place onion and cinnamon inside duck. Secure flap of skin with wooden cocktail sticks.

4 Place the duck, breast side down, on a roasting rack set in a large dish and brush with a little of the glaze. Microwave at 100% (High) for calculated time, following the steps on page 1217.

5 Leave the duck to stand for 5 minutes, covered with foil, shiny side in. Garnish and serve.

Microtips

Most duck today is sold while still young and is therefore often sold as duckling. The average sized bird weighs 1.8-2.3kg / 4-5lb, and since the meat is rich, the larger bird will serve four. Two ducks can be microwaved together providing your microwave has no turntable. Place in a casserole and microwave for 6-7 minutes per 450g / 1lb, turning frequently.

Fruity stuffed duck

47 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2.3kg / 5lb oven-ready duck

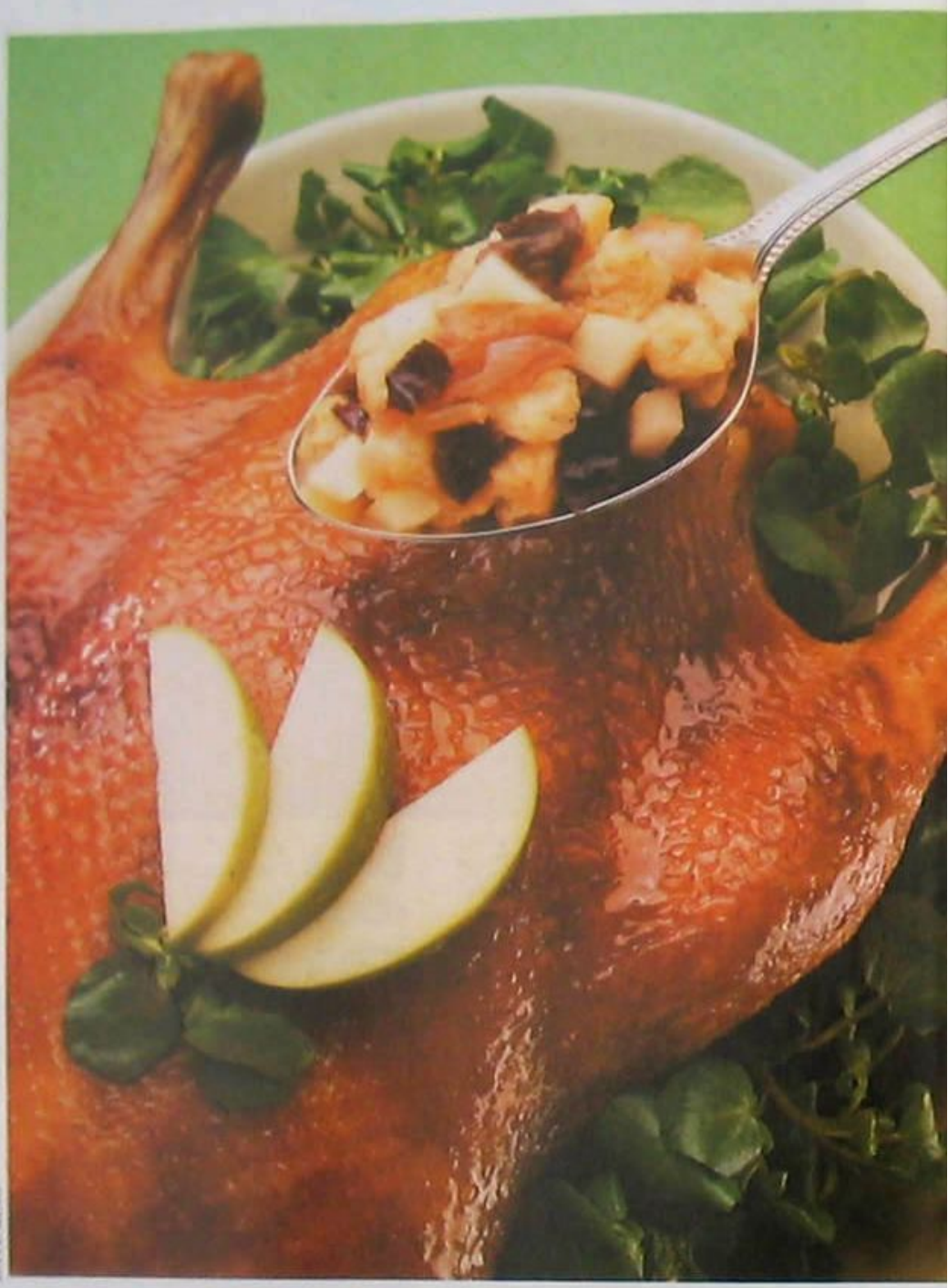
STUFFING
100g / 4oz dried prunes
150ml / ¼pt full-bodied red wine
1 onion, finely chopped
225g / 8oz cooking apples, peeled, cored and roughly chopped
5ml / 1tsp ground mixed spice
salt and pepper
45ml / 3tbls demerara sugar
2 thick slices white bread, cubed

GARNISH
1 dessert apple, cored and sliced
watercress sprigs

SERVES 4

1 Place the prunes in a bowl with the wine, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, stirring once. Set aside until cool.
2 Place the chopped onion and apple in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until just soft.
3 Drain the prunes, reserving the liquor. Remove the stones and roughly chop the fruit. Mix into the onion and apple, then add all remaining stuffing ingredients together with the reserved prune liquor, stirring gently so that the bread absorbs all the moisture.
4 Press the stuffing firmly into the body cavity of the duck. Fold skin flap over and secure with wooden cocktail sticks.
5 Weigh the stuffed duck and calculate the cooking time, allowing 7-8 minutes per 450g / 1lb.
6 Place the duck, breast side down, on a roasting rack set in a large dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 17-20 minutes. Turn duck breast side up, drain off fat and microwave at 100% (High) for the rest of the calculated cooking time, or until the bird is cooked and juices run clear.
7 Cover duck loosely with foil, shiny side in and stand for 5 minutes. Serve garnished with apple slices and watercress sprigs.

Fruity Stuffed Duck



DAVE KING

Microtips

One of the delights of roast duck is its crispy golden skin. Because of the high fat content, the skin becomes crisp and attractively golden even in the microwave; if however, you want a really crackly, brown skin, pop the duck in a very hot oven (220°C / 425°F / gas 7) or under a hot grill for 5-6 minutes, turning the duck over once. This extra browning process should be done during standing time. The duck will then be ready for serving.

Cook's notes

When calculating the cooking time for a duck that is going to be stuffed, it is essential to stuff the bird first, and then weigh it, to ensure accuracy. Test to see whether the duck is ready a few minutes before the end of the calculated time by inserting a sharp knife or skewer into the thickest part of the thigh if the juices run clear; the duck is cooked and the stuffing will be heated through. Stand duck as normal, covered with foil.

Chocolate

Take the guesswork out of cooking with chocolate. Use your microwave to get perfect results every time and add a touch of irresistibly rich indulgence to your cooking.

Rich and delicious, chocolate is hard to resist. However, even experienced cooks are wary of cooking with it.

Melting chocolate the conventional way — heating over a pan of simmering water — can be risky. There is the danger that overheating or moisture coming into contact with the chocolate will cause the chocolate to lose its gloss and becomes hard and unworkable.

With the microwave there is no mess or steam and little danger of overheating. Also, if melted chocolate sets before you have finished using it, simply pop it back into the microwave: the more often you melt and work chocolate the smoother and more manageable it becomes.

Many types of chocolate can be used for cooking, but results vary. Confectioners and pastry cooks use 'couverture'. This is expensive and hard to obtain, but gives the very best results. Fine dark chocolate is sold in tablets or loose. Plain dessert chocolate gives very acceptable results. Milk chocolate is useful if you want a sweeter, less chocolatey finish, but doesn't have the same intensity of flavour or the same gloss. Chocolate chips and chocolate-flavoured cake coverings are useful for family cakes.

When microwaving chocolate, make sure bowls and utensils are perfectly dry. Remember also that chocolate may still hold its shape when melted. Check by stirring after the microwaving time, pop back, if still solid.

Fat is sometimes added to chocolate to make it shiny, but butter and margarine turn melted chocolate grainy. Unless your recipe specifies otherwise, use vegetable oil which blends easily and doesn't alter the texture.

Chocolate Cream Drink

DON LAST

Chocolate cream drink

5¾ mins

Standing time: none

90g / 3½oz bar dessert milk chocolate
275ml / ½pt half cream
275ml / ½pt milk
sugar to taste
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cinnamon
pinch of ground cloves
4 cinnamon sticks

SERVES 4

1 Break the chocolate into a deep, heatproof bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1¾-2¾ minutes, until melted. Stir.
2 Whisk in the half cream and milk, sugar to taste and spices. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes, whisking once halfway through and at the end.
3 Ladle the chocolate drink into each of four small, heatproof glasses; serve with cinnamon sticks.

Microwaving times for melting chocolate

TYPE OF CHOCOLATE	QUANTITY IN SMALL PIECES	TIME AT 50% (MEDIUM) (STIR HALFWAY THROUGH AND AT END)
Chocolate chips *	50g / 2oz	2½-3½ mins
	100g / 4oz	3½-4½ mins
	225g / 8oz	4½-5 mins
Chocolate flavoured cake covering *	50g / 2oz	2-3 mins
	100g / 4oz	2½-3½ mins
	225g / 8oz	3½-4 mins
Dessert chocolate (milk)	50g / 2oz	1¾-2¾ mins
	100g / 4oz	2½-3½ mins
	225g / 8oz	3½-4 mins
Dessert chocolate (plain)	50g / 2oz	2-2½ mins
	100g / 4oz	2½-3 mins
	225g / 8oz	3-3½ mins
Cooking chocolate *	50g / 2oz	3-3½ mins
	100g / 4oz	4-4½ mins
	225g / 8oz	5½-6 mins
White chocolate	50g / 2oz	1¼-1¾ mins
	100g / 4oz	1½-2½ mins
	225g / 8oz	2½-3 mins

* Quantities and times are for both milk and plain varieties

Hot Chocolate Fondue

Hot chocolate fondue

7½ mins

Standing time: none

Serve with cubes of firm-textured sponge cake and a selection of prepared soft fresh fruit (thick slices of banana are good); provide long-handled forks for spearing the cakes and fruit dunks. Sponge fingers are also a good idea, but watch your own fingers don't get dunked.

175g / 6oz chocolate chips
25g / 1oz butter
150ml / ¼pt double cream
45ml / 3tbls unsweetened orange juice
45ml / 3tbls golden syrup or corn syrup

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the chocolate chips in a bowl with the butter.
2 Microwave, uncovered, for 4½ minutes at 50% (Medium) or until chocolate and butter have melted. Stir gently after 2 minutes of microwaving and at the end of the cooking time.
3 Blend in remaining ingredients and microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 3-4 minutes, until bubbling. Serve with cake or fruit dunks.

VARIATION
Use orange or coffee liqueur, brandy or strong black instant coffee instead of orange juice.

Microtips

If the chocolate dip thickens and becomes too stiff for easy dipping, microwave at 50% (Medium), until melted and bubbling again.

Cook's notes

Chocolate fondue can also double as a sauce. Try it over choux puffs, vanilla ice cream or meringues. If necessary, this fondue or sauce can be made in advance and reheated just before serving. To reheat, microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2 minutes until piping hot, then stir well.

Pears with chocolate sauce

16½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This velvety chocolate sauce is equally good with ice cream and will always be a firm favourite with the children.

125ml / 4fl oz water
225g / 8oz caster sugar
strip of thinly pared lemon zest
6 firm pears, peeled and cored, stalk retained
25g / 1oz chopped almonds, optional

CHOCOLATE SAUCE
175g / 6oz plain cooking chocolate
50g / 2oz butter
90ml / 6tbls double cream
90ml / 6tbls single cream

SERVES 6

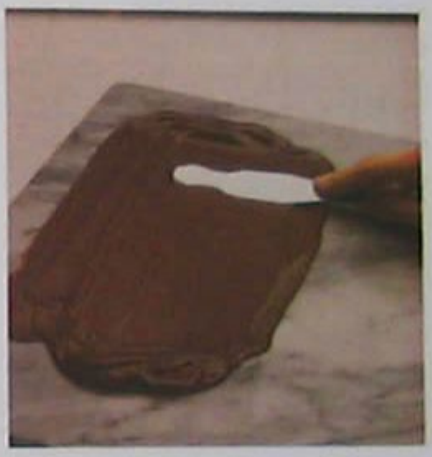
1 Mix together the water, sugar and zest in a deep bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until boiling.
2 Stand the pears upright in the syrup, arranging five pears around the edge of the bowl and one in the centre. Baste liberally with the syrup.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-10 minutes, or until the pears are tender, giving the bowl a half turn after 4 minutes. Leave to stand for 5 minutes. Cool, then chill for 2-3 hours.
4 To make the sauce: break the chocolate into a bowl and add the butter. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-5½ minutes, until smoothly melted. Gradually, blend in the creams, then microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2 minutes until heated through.
5 Place the pears in individual serving bowls and pour the hot chocolate sauce over each pear. Sprinkle with almonds, if wished.

Pears with Chocolate Sauce

PAUL WEBSTER

How to make Chocolate caraque

Melt *100g / 4oz cooking chocolate at 50% (Medium) for 4-4½ minutes. Stir well, then leave to set until solid. Melt chocolate as before and stir.*

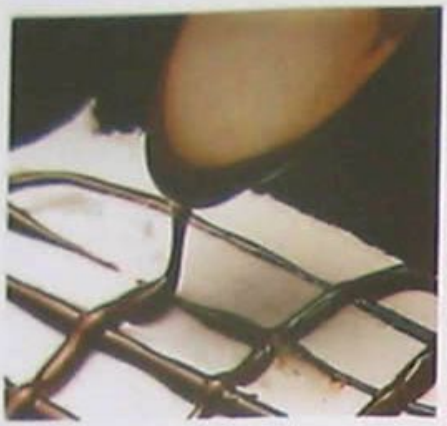


Pour *on to a laminated or marble surface; smooth to and fro with a palette knife until it starts to set. (Do not let set too hard, or it will crack.)*

Hold *a knife with a long flexible blade at a 45° angle to sheet of chocolate. Press point down with other hand and shave the chocolate into long curls.*

How to microwave chocolate decorations

For chocolate curls: *microwave a 50g / 2oz block of milk chocolate cake covering at 30% (Low) until just warm. Rotate and turn over once. With a vegetable peeler shave curls from edge onto a cold plate.*



To drizzle chocolate: *melt 50g / 2oz plain dessert chocolate at 50% (Medium) for 2-2½ minutes. Stir well; then spoon up a little and let it fall in lines in a thin, but steady stream from tip of spoon. Chill to set.*

Chocolate mousse

2½ mins

Standing time: none

3 large eggs, separated
30ml / 2tbls caster sugar
100g / 4oz plain dessert chocolate
pinch of salt
chocolate curls (see above), to decorate

SERVES 4

1 Whisk the egg yolks with the sugar until thick and creamy.
2 Break the chocolate into small pieces and place in a bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 2½-3 minutes until melted and glossy when stirred. Add to the egg yolk mixture and whisk until well blended.
3 Place the egg whites with the salt in a large bowl and whisk until they stand in soft peaks.
4 Stir a little of the egg whites into the chocolate mixture to soften it. Quickly and thoroughly fold in the remaining egg whites with a metal spoon until the mixtures are thoroughly blended.
5 Spoon into small dishes and refrigerate for 2 hours until set. Serve chilled, decorated with chocolate curls, see above, and extra cream, if wished.

Frosted chocolate cake

12 mins

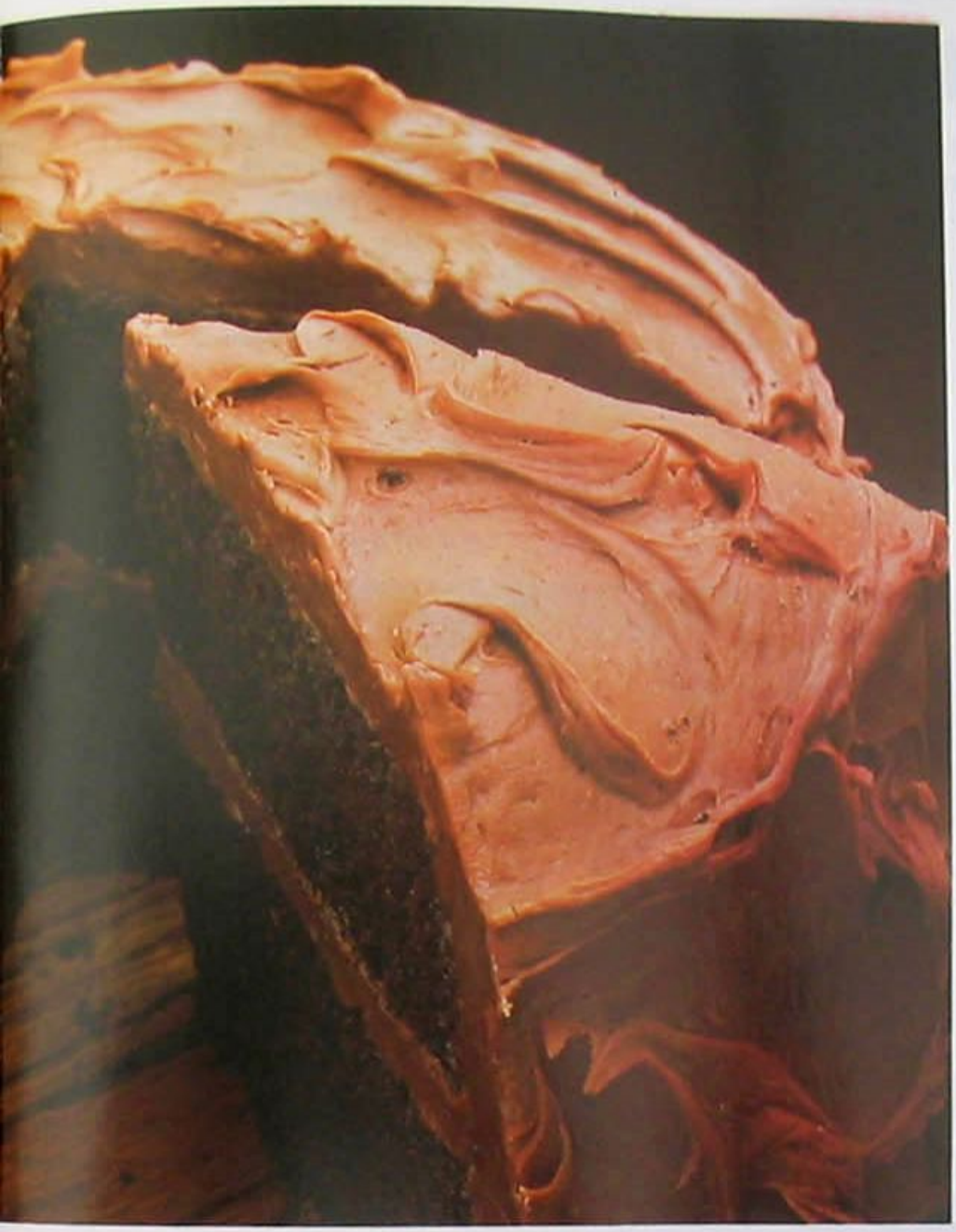
Standing time: 5 mins

100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
50g / 2oz cocoa powder
7.5ml / 1½tsp baking powder
175g / 6oz butter, softened
75g / 3oz soft dark brown sugar
3 eggs
100g / 4oz plain dessert chocolate
45ml / 3tbls milk

FROSTING
25g / 1oz butter
60ml / 4tbls milk
30ml / 2tbls cocoa powder, sifted
450g / 1lb icing sugar, sifted
50g / 2oz plain dessert chocolate
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

MAKES 10-12 SLICES

1 Grease a 20cm / 8in cake dish lightly with butter, margarine or oil. Line the base with a disc of lightly greased greaseproof paper.
2 Sift together the flour, cocoa and baking powder. Cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time with 15ml / 1tbls of the flour mixture with each egg, beating well between each addition.
3 Break chocolate into squares and place in a small bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 2½-3 minutes or until chocolate has melted. Beat into creamed mixture. Fold in the remaining flour and the milk.
4 Spoon mixture into prepared cake dish and level the top. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5½-6½ minutes, rotating the dish a half turn once; or until the cake shrinks a little from the sides of the dish and a wooden skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.
5 Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then turn out on to a wire rack to cool.
6 To make the frosting: place the butter and milk in a bowl. Micro-



Frosted Chocolate Cake

wave at 50% (Medium) for 1-2 minutes, until butter bubbles.

7 Gradually stir in the cocoa and icing sugar. Beat until smooth.

8 Break chocolate into a bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-2½ minutes until melted. Stir into frosting with vanilla flavouring; beat well until smooth.

9 Split the cold cake in half. Spread the bottom half with about one third of the frosting. Replace the top half. Cover top and sides of cake with remaining frosting, working quickly before it sets. (If necessary, soften frosting at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute.)

Freezer notes

Freeze the cake without frosting for up to six months. Split in half, then put the two halves back together, with freezer tissue in between; freeze in a polythene bag.

To thaw, remove any metal tie and microwave cake in bag at 20-30% (Defrost) for no longer than 5 minutes. Remove from bag, separate the layers and leave at room temperature for 10-15 minutes.

The filled and frosted cake can be frozen for up to three months, but should be thawed at room temperature for 3-4 hours.

Microwaving Frosted chocolate cake

Prepare *a 20cm / 8in cake dish by greasing lightly. Line the base of the dish with a circle of lightly greased greaseproof paper.*

Spoon *the mixture into the dish and level the top. Microwave the cake at 100% (High) for 5½-6½ minutes, rotating the dish a half turn once.*

The cake *is cooked when it shrinks from the sides and an inserted cocktail stick comes out clean. Do not overcook; the centre should be slightly sticky.*

Nouvelle cuisine dinner

Delight your friends with this 'new-style' dinner, which is a feast for the eye as well as the tastebuds. It looks wonderfully pretty and is so simple to prepare with the help of your microwave.

Nouvelle cuisine describes a modern French style of cooking which concentrates on delicate flavours and lighter textures, placing more emphasis on vegetables and fruit as highlights to the dishes.

Presentation is part and parcel of 'nouvelle' style — that means textures and shapes are all-important — and that's why microwaving lends itself so well to this school of cooking. The food should be so pretty that it almost seems a shame to eat it.

The delicious egg starter for this menu is decorated with lattice strips of vibrant red pimiento, and the unusual Vegetable Haystacks are a delight to the eye. If you would like to serve another vegetable, Fantail Potatoes (Part 24, page 659) will add another attractive touch.

You will find that your microwave will help you to present a really light, well-balanced meal which your guests will appreciate.

Tarragon Beef

Pimiento herb cocottes

4½ mins

Standing time: none

4 eggs
4 slices of liver pâté
60ml / 4tbls double cream
salt and pepper
60ml / 4tbls chopped fresh herbs
2 pieces of canned pimiento, cut lengthways into strips

GARNISH
sprigs of watercress
puff pastry crescents (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Grease four small ramekins and place a piece of pâté in the base of each one. Break an egg into each ramekin and prick the yolks with a cocktail stick.
2 Microwave the eggs at 50% (Medium) for 4-6 minutes, until the whites are beginning to set. Pour a spoonful of cream over each egg and season to taste. Microwave at 100% (High) for ½-1½ minutes, to set the whites.
3 Scatter 15ml / 1tbls chopped herbs over each egg and arrange the strips of pimiento in a lattice pattern on the top.
4 Place the ramekins on plates, surround with watercress and serve with puff pastry crescents.

Cook's notes

Almost any chopped fresh herbs can be used for this dish. Try a mixture of parsley and chives, or a little fresh dill to ring the changes with the flavours.

MENU

Pimiento and Herb Cocottes
Eggs baked with pâté and herbs

Tarragon Beef
Fillet served with a warm cream sauce

Vegetable Haystacks
Tender layered vegetable towers

Melba-feathered Ice Cups
Crisp, ice cream filled cups with feathered sauce

SERVES 4

Countdown

The day before
Microwave the crispy cups for the dessert. Allow to cool completely on a wire rack, then store in an airtight container. Make the peach sauce and keep in a covered container in the refrigerator overnight.

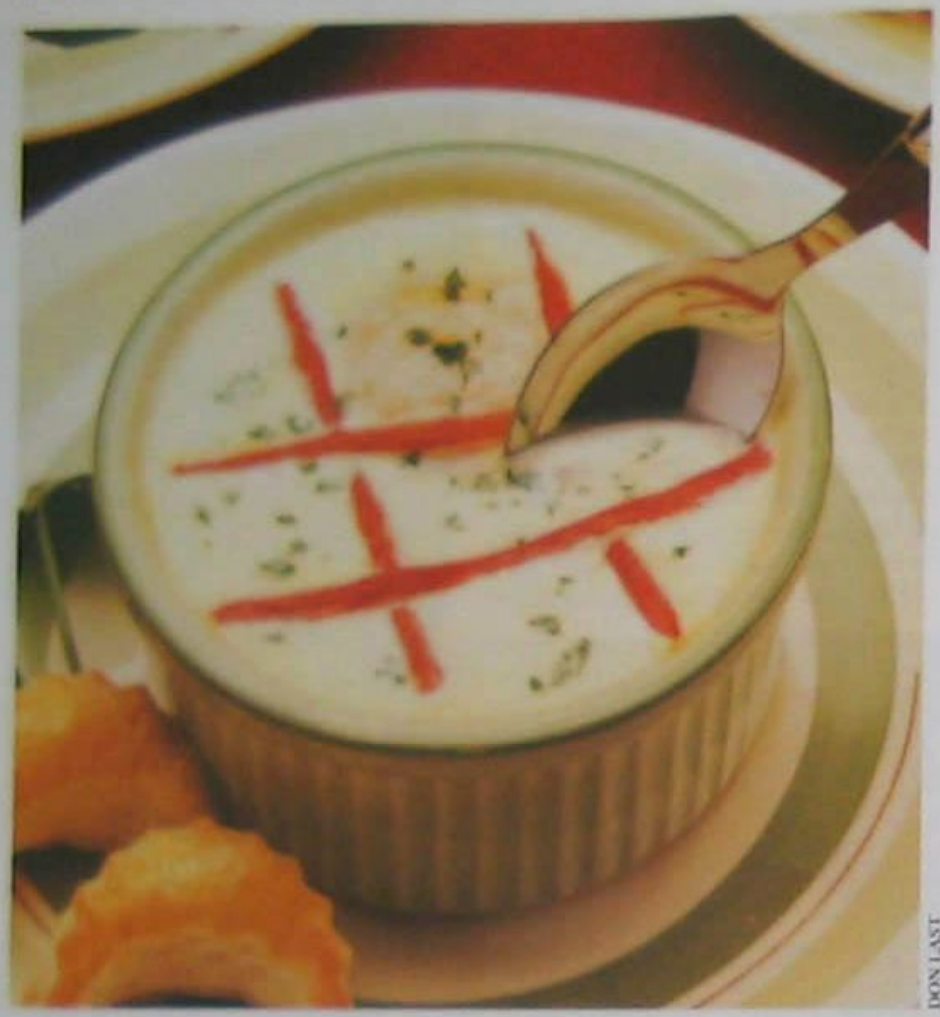
Early on the day
Prepare the marinade. Marinate the beef according to the recipe. Chop the herbs and store in a covered container in the refrigerator. Peel and chop the vegetables for the haystacks and refrigerate separately in polythene bags. Peel the potatoes, if serving, and place in a bowl of cold water in the refrigerator. Cook the puff pastry crescents for the starter conventionally, if serving.

Thirty minutes before serving
Remove all the vegetables from the refrigerator and drain the potatoes, if serving. Microwave the beef, then cover loosely with foil, shiny side in, to hold the heat. Microwave the vegetables and leave covered in the dish. Remove the ice cream from the freezer to the refrigerator for easy serving.

Five minutes before serving,
Microwave the Pimiento and Herb Cocottes and serve hot with the pastry crescents.

Between first and second courses
Microwave the sauce and slice the beef. Heat the vegetables by microwaving at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Assemble the 'haystacks' on individual heated serving plates.

Before serving the dessert
Pour the peach sauce on to individual plates in an even pool. Feather with the Melba sauce. Fill the crispy cups with ice cream and serve immediately on the sauce.



DON LAST

Tarragon beef

14½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

Serve the tender beef fillet with Vegetable Haystacks and Fantail Potatoes (Part 24, page 659) for a more filling meal. Garnish with minaret mushrooms (see Cook's notes, right).

225ml / 8fl oz water
45ml / 3tbls red wine
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
5ml / 1tsp dried tarragon
1.5ml / ¼tsp salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp pepper
450g / 1lb piece of beef fillet
minaret mushrooms
fresh tarragon to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Mix the water, wine, oil, tarragon, salt and pepper in a jug, uncovered, and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until boiling.

2 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave the marinade for 1 minute. Cool slightly. Place beef in a large polythene bag and place in a baking dish.

3 Pour the marinade into the bag. Chill for 4-8 hours turning several times to keep the meat covered.

4 Remove the beef from the marinade and place on a roasting rack, the thinner end tucked under to make an even shape. Secure with string. Reserve marinade.

5 Shield the ends and corners of the beef with small, smooth pieces of well-secured foil. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Remove the foil.

6 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 8½-10 minutes or until the internal temperature is 57°C / 135°F, turning the meat over once. Leave to stand for 3 minutes. Reserve the meat juices. Arrange the meat on a heated serving dish and garnish with the mushrooms and fresh tarragon leaves.

Tarragon sauce

3½ mins

Standing time: none

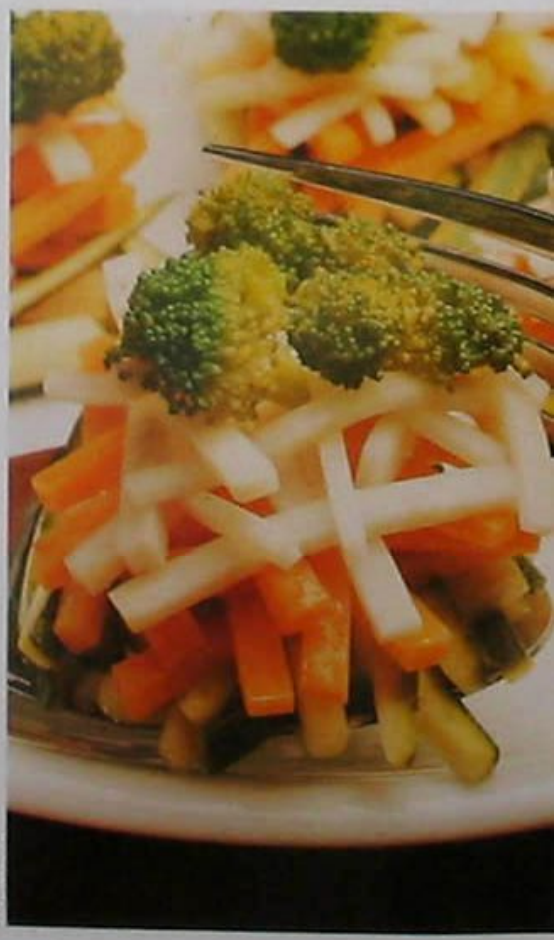
reserved marinade from the Tarragon beef
drained meat juices from beef
½ beef stock cube
125ml / 4fl oz double cream
2 egg yolks
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the marinade and meat juices in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes. Add the stock cube and stir well to dissolve.

2 Whisk the cream and egg yolks into the liquid and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 1½ minutes, whisking every 30 seconds, until slightly thickened. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve in a warmed sauceboat to accompany the Tarragon Beef, Vegetable Haystacks and Fantail Potatoes.

Left: *Pimiento and Herb Cocottes*
Below: *Vegetable Haystacks*



RAY DUNS

Vegetable haystacks

6½ mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz carrots, cut in matchsticks
100g / 4oz celeriac, cut in matchsticks
100g / 4oz broccoli, cut in tiny florets
40g / 1½oz butter
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
100g / 4oz courgettes, cut in matchsticks
salt and pepper

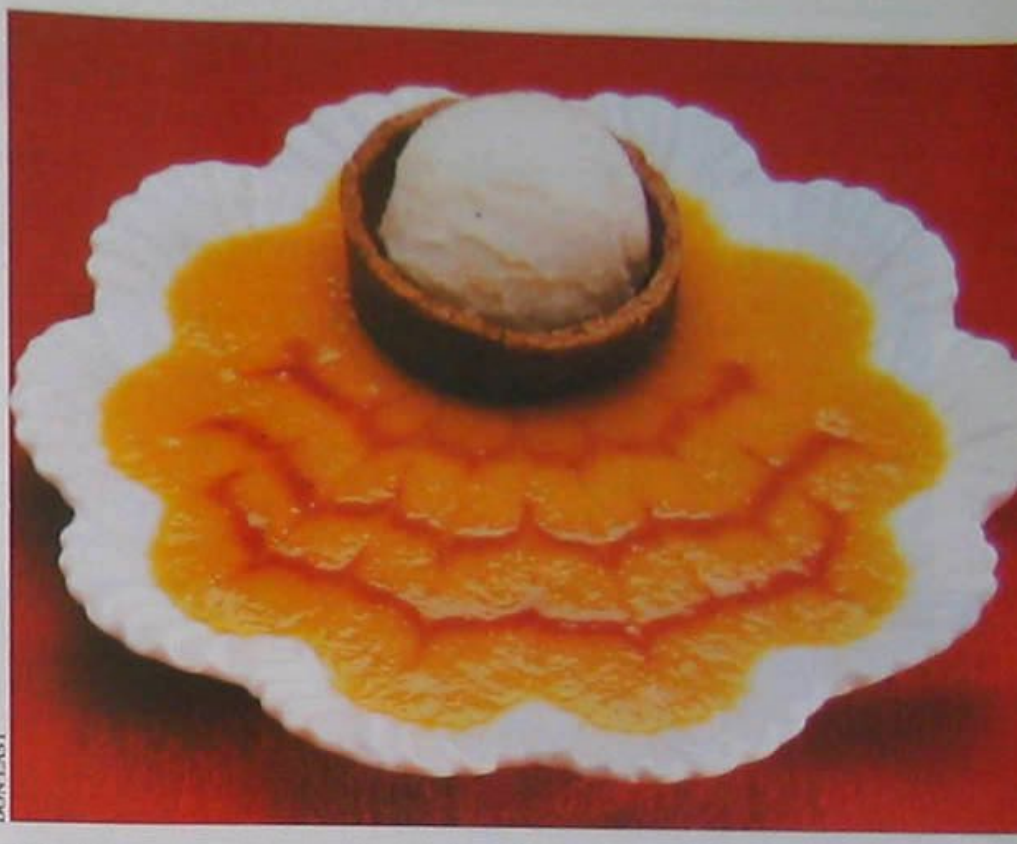
SERVES 4

1 Arrange the carrots, celeriac and broccoli in separate piles around the edge of a shallow dish. Sprinkle the vegetables with lemon juice and dot with the butter.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender but still crisp, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes.
3 Place the courgettes in the centre of the dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until the courgettes are just cooked. Add seasoning to taste.
4 Arrange the vegetables in layers in four roughly triangular piles like haystacks. Serve at once with the beef.

VARIATION
If celeriac is not available, substitute baby turnip cut into matchsticks or finely sliced leeks. Microwave in the same way as for celeriac.

Cook's notes

To make minaret mushrooms, select eight neat, evenly-sized open-cup mushrooms. Using a sharp knife, make five spiral cuts from the centre of each mushroom. Repeat the cuts close to the first ones so that thin grooves are left. Brush the mushrooms lightly with melted butter and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, until hot. Serve with the beef.



DON LAST

Melba-feathered Cups

Melba-feathered cups

4 mins

Standing time: 1 min

50g / 2oz crustless wholemeal bread
75g / 3oz soft brown sugar
7g / ¼oz butter, softened
10ml / 2tsp water
4 scoops of ice cream or sorbet to serve

SAUCE
425g / 15oz can peach slices in natural juice
15ml / 1tbls arrowroot
caster sugar to taste
20ml / 4tsp bottled Melba sauce, or raspberry topping

SERVES 4

1 To make the crisp containers, grease four individual ramekins. Place the bread in a food processor and reduce to fine crumbs. Add the sugar and butter and process until the butter is evenly distributed. With the processor still running, add the water and continue until the mixture is crumbly.
2 Divide the crumb mixture between the ramekins and, using a metal spoon, press over the base and sides to form a shell. Arrange in a ring in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3½ minutes, until crisp at the edges. Stand 1 minute. Cool completely.
3 To make the sauce, drain the peaches and reserve the juice. Purée the peaches.
4 Put 45ml / 3tbls of the reserved juice in a medium bowl and stir in the arrowroot. Stir in the rest of the juice and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, until thickened. Stir in the peach purée and cool.
5 To serve, pour some of the sauce on to each of four dessert plates and spread to make an even pool. Drizzle 5ml / 1tsp of the Melba sauce in wavy lines across a quarter of the plate, then draw a skewer or the point of a knife across the wavy lines to make a feathered effect.
6 Put a scoop of ice cream into each cup and set it on top of the sauce. Serve immediately.

VARIATION
To make apricot sauce, use a 400g / 14oz can of apricots in apple juice or syrup. Make as for peach sauce.

Hey presto pizzas

Pizzas are so speedy to prepare with the help of your microwave. Make your own creations using your favourite toppings — as many as you want — then serve with a simple salad for a quick family meal.

Microwaved pizzas are a great success, since the cheese bubbles and melts in mere minutes, to leave both base and filling still deliciously moist. Combine your microwave's speed with the convenience of ready-made pizza products for fast family meals — a simple salad is the only extra needed.

Most supermarkets now stock ready-prepared pizza toppings in cans or jars — and in several varieties. This not only saves time but also the trouble of cooking thin tomato sauces until they are good and thick. However, if you can't find a supermarket topping, flavour a can of chopped tomatoes (they're thicker than the ordinary whole ones) with herbs, seasoning, grated onion and a little sugar, for

Quick Pepper Pizza

DON LAST

an equally successful alternative.

Large supermarkets also stock ready-prepared pizza bread bases, usually several to a pack. Freeze any that you don't need for another time. Lighter French bread makes a tasty shortcut base too, and is preferred by many to the slightly heavier dough bases. Simply halve French sticks lengthways and spread the cut sides lavishly with pizza topping. Sprinkle with grated cheese and microwave until cheese melts to make a quick and easy snack.

As a further time saver, ready-assembled pizzas freeze perfectly.

Quick pepper pizza

6 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

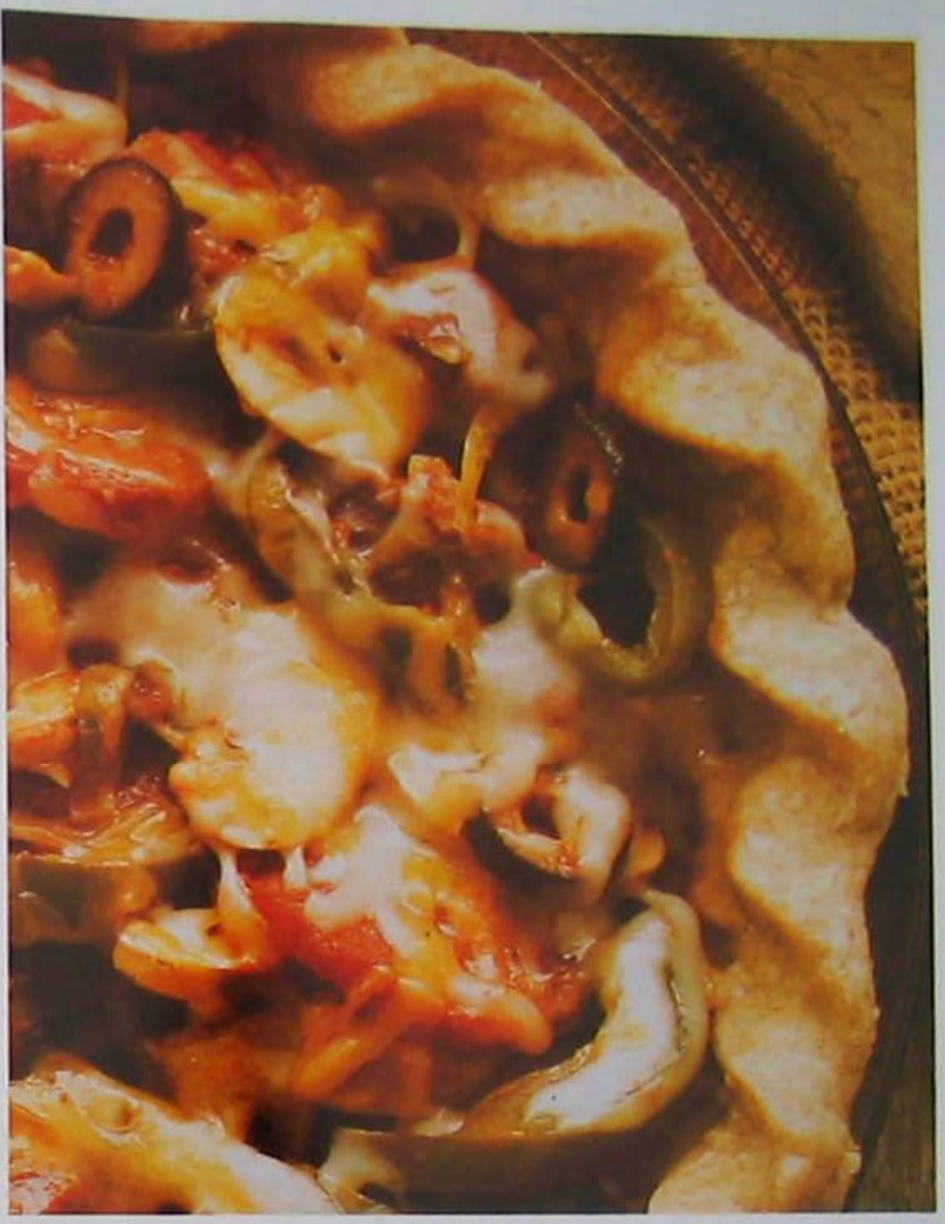
50g / 1.75oz can anchovies, drained
170g / 6oz jar pizza topping
25cm / 10in ready-prepared white pizza base
½ small red pepper, seeded and sliced into rings
175g / 6oz Mozzarella cheese, grated
8 black olives, halved
15ml / 1tbls grated Parmesan

SERVES 2

1 Chop the anchovies and mix with the pizza topping. Spread over the pizza base.
2 Cover with the pepper rings and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
3 Sprinkle over the Mozzarella cheese. Press the olives into the cheese and sprinkle with the grated Parmesan.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until heated through and the cheese has melted. Leave to stand for 3 minutes.

Cook's notes

If pizza topping is unavailable, use canned chopped tomatoes mixed with any fresh or dried herbs you choose. Oregano adds a specially authentic Italian flavour, or try fresh basil, if it is in season.



Zingy Pizza Pie

Zingy pizza pie

16 mins

Standing time: none

1 microwaved wholewheat pie case (see Part 4, page 87)
1 green pepper, seeded and cut into strips
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced
30ml / 2tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
225g / 8oz smoked pork sausages, cut into 12mm / ½in slices
large pinch of chilli powder
large pinch of ground cumin
large pinch of dried oregano
30ml / 2tbls black olives, stoned and sliced
50g / 2oz Mozzarella, grated
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 2

1 Combine the green pepper and mushrooms in a small bowl, cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until tender. Drain well.
2 In a 1.1L / 2pt casserole, combine the tomato ketchup or sauce, the tomato purée and all the seasonings. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
3 Stir in the sliced sausages, green pepper, mushrooms and olives and pour into the prepared pie case. Sprinkle over the grated cheese and microwave for 1-2 minutes, until the cheese has melted and the pie is very hot; serve at once.

Deep-dish pizzas

12½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Pizza is a favourite snack at any time, with any age group. Cut into wedges, these pizzas make a quick suppertime or party nibble.

280g / 10oz packet white bread mix
67.5ml / 4½tbls dry breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls poppy seeds
15g / ½oz butter, melted

TOPPING
450g / 1lb lean minced pork
1 small onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
5ml / 1tsp soy sauce
1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped
5ml / 1tsp oregano
5ml / 1tsp caster sugar
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
500g / 18oz carton creamed tomatoes
salt and pepper
100g / 4oz Mozzarella or Cheddar cheese, grated
15ml / 1tbls chopped fresh parsley
grated Parmesan cheese to finish

EACH SERVES 8

VARIATIONS
If cartons of creamed tomatoes are not available, use canned chopped tomatoes. You can enhance the tomato flavour by adding 15ml / 1tbls of tomato paste.

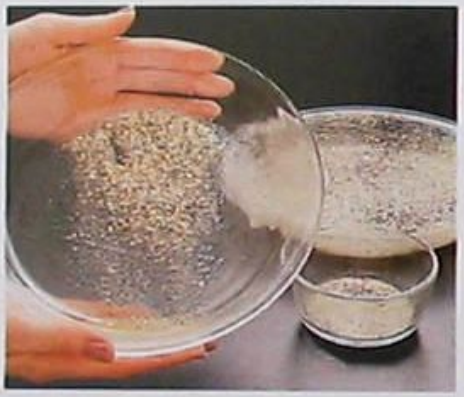
Freezer notes

Prepare the pizza filling and leave to cool. Spread it over the pizza base, but do not add the cheese. Wrap, label and freeze for up to 3 months.

To thaw, unwrap the pizza and cover with absorbent paper. Stand on upturned plate and turn every 2 minutes. Microwave at 30% (Defrost) for 10-12 minutes, leave to stand for 4-5 minutes, then sprinkle with cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes, until very hot. Stand, covered, 1-2 minutes.

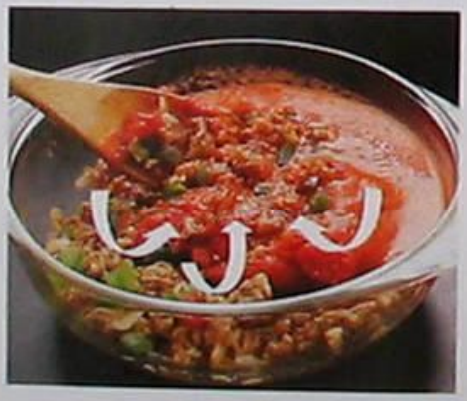
How to microwave Deep-dish pizzas

Put *the bread mix in a bowl and add water according to the packet directions. Mix to form a soft dough and knead for about 5 minutes, until the dough is smooth and elastic.*



Combine *breadcrumbs and poppy seeds. Brush two 25cm / 10in pie plates with half the melted butter. Sprinkle in the poppy seed mixture, tilting plates to coat evenly.*

Place *pork, onion, garlic and soy sauce in a large bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, until the pork crumbles easily, stirring halfway through.*



Stir *in green pepper, oregano, basil, sugar, tomatoes and seasoning. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once, until mixture is cooked through.*

Halve *the dough; roll out each half to a 26cm / 10½in circle and press well into the plates. Brush with remaining butter; sprinkle over the remaining crumb mixture.*

Cover *the plates with cling film and leave to rise in a warm place for about 30 minutes. Remove the cling film and prick the bases thoroughly with a fork to prevent them from rising.*

Microwave *the pizza bases one at a time, at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes, or until the bread feels dry and springs back when pressed. Give the dish a quarter turn three times.*

Divide *the mixture between the bread cases. Sprinkle evenly with Mozzarella or Cheddar cheese (50g / 2oz for each case), then scatter over a layer of chopped parsley.*

Microwave *the pizzas, one at a time, at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, until cheese melts and pizza is hot. Sprinkle with Parmesan and stand for 5 minutes.*

Microtips

Make use of your microwave to prove the dough, particularly if your kitchen is very cool. Place one pizza base, covered with cling film, in the microwave and cook at 100% (High) for 15 seconds. Leave to stand for 7-10 minutes. Repeat the cooking and standing twice more, until the dough has doubled in bulk. You can alternate the two pizza bases, cooking one while the other is standing to save time. Microwave bases (see Step 5) and either use immediately or freeze.

Olive pizzas

9¾ mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter
1 onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 × 18cm / 7in ready-prepared wholemeal pizza bases
225g / 8oz Emmental or Gruyère cheese, grated
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika
8 stoned black olives, sliced
8 stoned green olives, sliced

EACH SERVES 4-6

Olive Pizza

1 Place the butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds, until melted.
2 Stir in the onion and garlic. Cover with cling film rolled back at one edge and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until tender, stirring once. Spread over the pizza bases.
3 Combine the grated cheese and paprika and sprinkle two-thirds evenly over the onion.
4 Top with sliced olives, then sprinkle over the remaining cheese.
5 Microwave, uncovered, one pizza at a time, at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, until the cheese has melted. Cut into wedges and microwave for 1 more minute, if you like the cheese really 'stringy'.
6 Cook second pizza and serve.

Cook's notes

For a more substantial 'main meal' version, arrange a layer of cooked ham or salami over the onion layer before sprinkling with the cheese, and allow an extra 30 seconds cooking for each pizza.

Spicy sausage pizza

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

1 onion, chopped
450g / 1lb pork or beef sausagemeat
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper
90ml / 6tbls mild chilli relish
230g / 8oz can chopped tomatoes
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
5ml / 1tsp fennel seeds
25cm / 10in pizza base
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 6

1 Place the onion in a large shallow dish together with the sausagemeat, Worcestershire sauce and salt and pepper to taste.
2 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, until the meat is cooked through. Turn dish and mash the mixture with a fork three times during cooking.
3 Mix together the chilli relish, chopped tomatoes, half the chopped parsley and the fennel seeds. Spread half this mixture over the pizza base.
4 Mix the remaining tomato mixture with sausagemeat and spread over the pizza. Sprinkle with remaining parsley then the cheese.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until heated through and the cheese has melted. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.

Spicy Sausage Pizza

Microwaving trout

Trout is deliciously moist and full of flavour. Use your microwave to make the most of this delectable fish and ensure it is cooked to perfection every time.

Like all whole fish, trout cooks beautifully in the microwave. The flesh remains firm and moist while retaining its lovely full flavour.

Fresh trout weigh from 175-225g / 6-8oz; it is customary to serve one trout per person — a 225g / 8oz fish normally satisfying an average appetite. Buy fish with bright moist eyes and shiny closely-fitting scales. If the skin looks dull, or if the fish has a strong fishy smell, it should be avoided. Trout freezes well and frozen trout can be used in any of these recipes. Thaw (see Freezer note) before following recipes.

Cover trout when microwaving to prevent the fish drying out and to help keep the inside of the cooker clean. The trout can be brushed with a little melted butter or lemon juice to enhance the flavour and keep the skin moist.

Trout with Nut Stuffing

Place fish in a shallow dish with the backbone to the edge of the dish, overlapping the thinner tail ends to prevent overcooking.

Test whether the fish is cooked at the end of the minimum recommended microwaving time. The flesh should look opaque and flake easily when forked. It is always better to slightly undercook the fish as it will continue to cook during standing time.

Cook's notes

Rainbow trout is the commercially farmed species and is the one most commonly available from fishmongers and supermarkets. Brown trout is the wild variety and is quite hard to come by unless there is a fly fisherman in the family. However, both are delicious, so non-anglers need not despair!

Trout with nut stuffing

9¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 trout, about 275g / 10oz each, cleaned
25g / 1oz butter
½ onion, sliced
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
3 or 4 button mushrooms, sliced
30ml / 2tbls pine nuts, chopped
22.5ml / 1½tbls hazelnuts, chopped
1 tomato, skinned and chopped
good pinch of celery seed
salt and pepper

SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter
1 garlic clove, crushed
good pinch of paprika

SERVES 2

Almond and garlic trout

9 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 trout, about 225g / 8oz each
50g / 2oz flaked almonds
40g / 1½oz butter
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
15ml / 1tbls white wine
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Microwave almonds, butter and garlic at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until almonds are golden, stirring twice. Add remaining ingredients.

2 Arrange fish in dish and pour over almond mixture. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes or until fish flakes easily. Stand for 5 minutes.

How to microwave Trout with nut stuffing

Remove *head from trout if preferred. Place the butter, onion and green pepper for the stuffing in a bowl. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes. Add the mushrooms, nuts, tomato, celery seed and seasoning and microwave for further 2 minutes.*

Stuff *the two fish with the nut and vegetable mixture. Place in a buttered square dish with the backbone to the edge of the dish.*

Place *butter, garlic and paprika in bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds or until butter is melted. Brush a little over fish.*

Cover *the dish with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Rotate the dish and microwave for a further 2-3 minutes or until fish is tender and flesh flakes easily. Stand for 5 minutes, then serve with the remaining sauce.*

PAUL WEBSTER

Devilled trout en papillote

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 trout, about 225g / 8oz each, cleaned
4 baby carrots, cut into 5cm / 2in julienne strips
2 large celery stalks, cut into 5cm / 2in julienne strips
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
40g / 1½oz butter
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place carrots, celery, Worcestershire sauce, butter and seasoning in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.

2 Place each fish on a double layer of buttered greaseproof paper, measuring 35.5 × 25cm / 14 × 10in. Spoon one quarter of the vegetable mixture over each trout, adding a little of the buttery juices. Fold paper over fish and loosely seal the top edge of the parcels, twisting the ends tightly.

3 Place packets in a shallow dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, rotating the dish halfway through cooking. Stand for 5 minutes. Serve the trout in their little packets.

Lemony Trout

Cook's notes

The fishmonger will gut (clean) the trout for you and remove the head if liked. There is no need to skin trout as the tiny, soft, edible scales are an integral part of the skin and would be hard to remove without skinning the fish at the same time. No further preparation is needed — simply wash the fish under cold running water and pat dry carefully with absorbent paper. Always handle trout gently as the skin is fragile and easily damaged.

Lemony trout

8¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

This lightly piquant dish is delicious served with tender young vegetables, like new potatoes and mange tout peas.

4 trout, about 225g / 8oz each, cleaned

STUFFING
40g / 1½oz butter
1 spring onion, chopped
1 red pepper, seeded and chopped
50g / 2oz fresh brown or white breadcrumbs
50g / 2oz mushrooms, finely chopped
5ml / 1tsp grated lemon zest
salt and pepper
lemon wedges and parsley strips, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Place 25g / 1oz butter, the onion and red pepper in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes until onion is just soft. Add the breadcrumbs, mushrooms and lemon zest, season with salt and pepper and mix well.
2 Spoon one quarter of the stuffing into each trout and place the fish in a shallow buttered dish.
3 Place the remaining butter in a small bowl and microwave for 15-20 seconds or until melted. Brush over the trout. Cover dish with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes or until the fish flakes easily. Stand for 5 minutes. Remove skin if liked, then garnish.

Freezer notes

To thaw 2 × 225g / 8oz frozen trout, remove from package and place in a shallow dish. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 9-11 minutes, turning dish once or twice. Stand for 5 minutes. To thaw 4 × 225g / 8oz trout, proceed as above, but microwave for 19-21 minutes.

Trout with watercress

8¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

To stop the bowl skidding about in this recipe when beating and trickling in the butter for the sauce, stand the bowl on a damp cloth or a piece of cling film.

4 trout, about 225-275g / 8-10 each, cleaned

SAUCE
1 bunch watercress, stalks trimmed
100g / 4oz butter
1 lemon
2 egg yolks
4-6 drained anchovy fillets, very finely chopped
pepper
lemon wedges, to garnish

SERVES 4

Microtips

Cold eggs straight from the refrigerator are more inclined to curdle when combined with butter or oil. So, to bring them to room temperature, beat two egg yolks in a small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 seconds. This should prevent them from curdling.

How to microwave Trout with watercress

Arrange *fish in a buttered shallow dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes or until fish flakes easily, rotating dish a quarter turn twice during cooking. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.*

Chop *three-quarters of the watercress very finely, reserve remainder for garnish. Place the butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds until just melted.*

Cut *lemon in half and squeeze juice from one half. Whisk juice with egg yolks until frothy. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Beat again while slowly trickling in melted butter to make a smooth sauce.*

Microwave *sauce at 100% (High) for 15-20 seconds until warm. Add chopped watercress, anchovies, salt and pepper. Garnish fish with remaining watercress and lemon, cut into wedges. Serve the sauce separately.*

Tropical fruits

Colourful tropical fruits bring a taste of sunshine to your table. Whether for main courses or desserts, the microwave will make the most of their exciting textures and flavours.

It's now so easy to find a wide variety of tropical fruits to impress and delight your friends and family. The range in supermarkets is increasing all the time, and if yours doesn't stock what you want — ask for it. Once you know how to choose, store and prepare these fruits, you can include them with confidence in your menus.

Guava can be pear-shaped with tough yellow skins and pale green flesh, or round with purple skins and red flesh. They have a strong, musky aroma but the flavour is delicate. When ripe they have a strong smell and are slightly soft when pressed. To prepare: peel and slice.

Kiwifruit are oval with thin and hairy brown skins. The flesh is bright green with edible black seeds — a very attractive fruit when sliced, though rather tart. To prepare: thinly peel away the skin and cut across into 6-8 slices.

Mangoes can be round or kidney-shaped and they vary in size. The fruit contains a large stone and has a bright yellow, juicy flesh when ripe. The tough skin softens and changes from green to reddish-orange when it is ready to eat.

Calypso Fruit Compote

Passion fruit are plum-sized fruits with tough purple-brown skins. When ripe, the skin becomes wrinkled. The flesh is juicy, sweet and yellow with small edible black seeds. To prepare: halve and scoop out the flesh. Eat raw or make into a sauce.

Pawpaw (or papaya) is a large pear-shaped fruit with a tough green skin which turns yellow as it ripens. The flesh is pinky-orange with small black inedible seeds in the centre. To prepare: cut in half, remove the seeds and peel. Use in fruit salads and in sorbets.

To store: keep these fruits at room temperature until ripe. Then store in the refrigerator and use within 1-2 days for kiwifruit and 2-3 days for passion fruit, guava, mango and pawpaw.

PAUL WEBSTER

Calypso fruit compote

3 mins

Standing time: none

75ml / 3fl oz exotic pure fruit or mango juice
75ml / 3fl oz white wine
50g / 2oz caster sugar
good pinch of ground cinnamon
1 mango, peeled, stoned and diced
1 pawpaw, peeled, seeded, diced
1 guava, peeled and thinly sliced
2 passion fruit, cut in half and flesh scooped out
1 kiwifruit, peeled and sliced
1 slice fresh pineapple, peeled, cored and cut into wedges

SERVES 6

1 In a 2.3L / 4pt bowl, combine the fruit juice, wine (if using), sugar and cinnamon. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes to dissolve the sugar, stirring once.
2 Stir the fruit into the hot syrup. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute to heat the fruit. Serve hot or chilled.

Cook's notes

For perfectly round slices of kiwi fruit, cut the fruit horizontally before peeling. Then use a knife to remove the skin from each slice.

Tropical plaice rolls

9¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

15g / ½oz butter
1 small onion, finely chopped
50g / 2oz fresh breadcrumbs
10ml / 2tsp fresh parsley
1 kiwi fruit, peeled and finely chopped
grated zest of ½ orange
15ml / 1tbls orange juice
50g / 2oz frozen prawns, thawed and chopped (see Microtips)
salt and pepper
4 × 100-150g / 4-6oz plaice fillets, skinned

SAUCE
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
about 50ml / 2fl oz fish stock
about 50ml / 2fl oz white wine
45ml / 3tbls single cream

GARNISH
1 kiwifruit, peeled and sliced
8 orange slices

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter and onion in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until the onion is soft.
2 Mix in breadcrumbs, parsley, kiwifruit, half the orange zest, orange juice and prawns. Season.
3 Lay the fillets, skinned side up on a board and spread the stuffing over. Roll up and secure with wooden cocktail sticks. Arrange, join side down, in a large, shallow, buttered dish.

Tropical Plaice Rolls

4 Cover the dish with cling film, and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until the fish flakes easily, rotating the dish once during cooking. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then remove the cocktail sticks.
5 Place the cornflour in a jug and mix to a smooth paste with a little of the drained juices from the fish. Add the remaining juices and make up to 150ml / ¼pt with fish stock and white wine. Add the remaining orange zest and stir well.
6 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until boiling, stirring after every minute. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then stir in the cream. Pour the sauce over the fillets. Place two slices of kiwifruit on each roll. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 45-60 seconds. Garnish with orange twists.

Microtips

Place frozen prawns in a single layer in a shallow dish. Cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-2 minutes. Drain and use.

RAY DUNS

Jamaican chicken

21 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

40g / 1½oz butter, cut in pieces
1 large onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
2-3 fresh red chillies, cored, seeded and finely chopped
10ml / 2tsp curry powder
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
1 chicken stock cube
425ml / ¾pt exotic pure fruit or mango juice
4 × 175g / 6oz chicken breasts, on the bone, skinned
1 large ripe mango, peeled, stoned and diced
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
little cold water to mix
salt
juice of 1 lime
banana slices, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter, onion, garlic and chillies in a 2.5L / 4½pt deep dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until the onion is soft, stirring halfway through cooking.

2 Stir in the curry, ginger and cinnamon powders, crumbled stock cube and fruit juice. Stir well. Add the chicken, placing the thicker parts to the outside of the dish, spoon over sauce to coat.

3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12 minutes. Add the mango and microwave, covered, for a further 3-5 minutes or until the chicken is tender.

4 Arrange the chicken on a warm serving dish, cover and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Mix the cornflour with a little water to form a smooth paste and stir into the sauce with salt to taste and the lime juice. Microwave, uncovered, for a further 2-2½ minutes or until boiling, stirring after every 30 seconds. Pour over the chicken. Serve with rice and banana slices.

Cook's notes

Red chillies are hotter than green ones. Removing the core and seeds gives a milder taste. Remember to wash your hands after preparing the chillies (see Part 43, page 1166.)

To prepare mangoes

Stand *mango, on its side, on a plate to catch the juice. Make two lengthways cuts, either side of the flat stone. Peel skin from central section; cut remaining flesh from stone.*

Using *a sharp knife, criss-cross flesh through to skin. Push from underneath, so the cubed flesh pops up; cut flesh away from the skin, or scoop out the flesh with a spoon.*

Microtips

Mangoes make a speedy sweet sauce to serve with ice cream, sponge puddings or meringues. To make 425ml / ¾pt sauce microwave the chopped flesh of two mangoes with 60ml / 4tbls frozen concentrated orange juice at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until the orange juice has melted. Stir twice. Purée in a blender, then sweeten the sauce to taste and reheat at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, until the sauce is hot but not boiling. Stir twice during microwaving.

Pawpaw fiesta

3 mins

Standing time: none

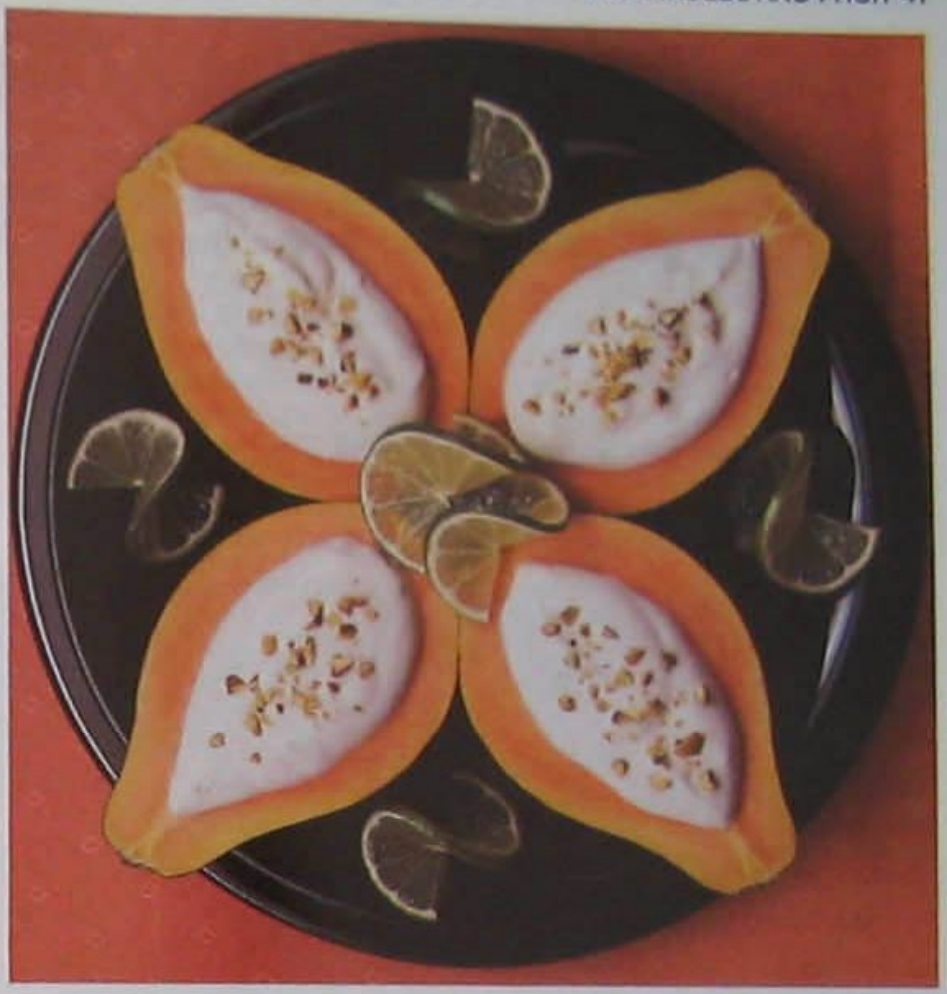
An elegant as well as exotic dessert for your next dinner party.

2 pawpaw
5-10ml / 1-2tsp lime juice
vanilla ice cream or thick natural yoghurt, to serve
chopped unsalted pistachio nuts or ground cinnamon, to decorate
lime slices and mint sprigs to decorate

SERVES 4

1 Cut the pawpaw in half and scoop out the seeds. Arrange the pawpaw on a large plate with the stem ends to the outside and sprinkle evenly with lime juice. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every minute.
2 Fill the centre of each pawpaw with scoops of ice cream or yoghurt. Sprinkle with nuts or dust with cinnamon. Serve at once.

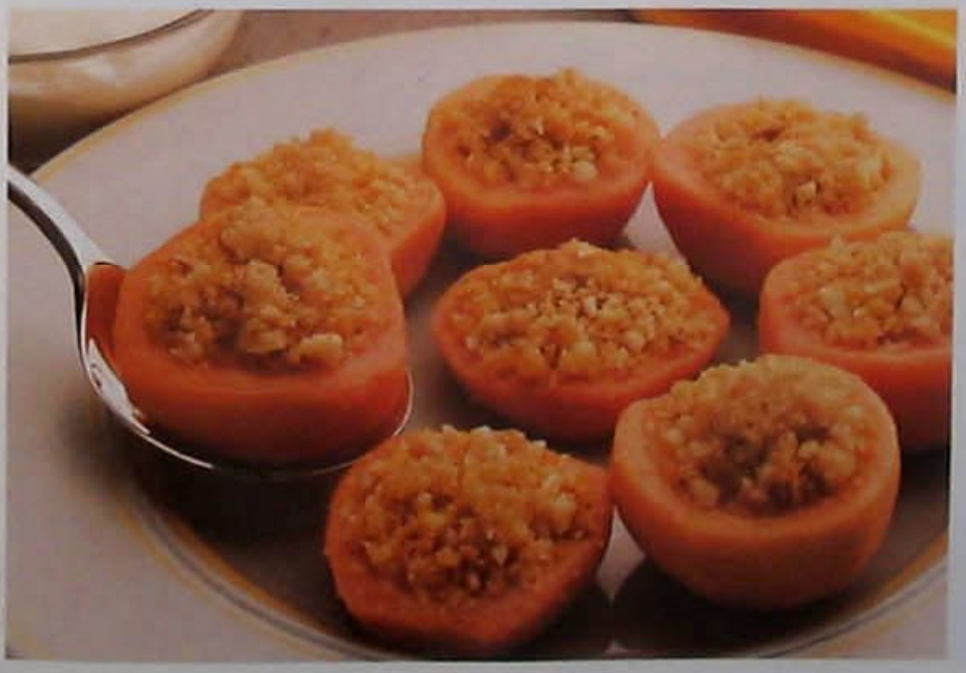
VARIATION
For a boozy alternative, sprinkle the pawpaw with orange liqueur, instead of lime juice.



Slimmer's notes

Use low-fat natural yoghurt to fill the paw paws and a sprinkling of cinnamon. This gives a dessert at just 60Cal / 250kJ per portion.

Above: *Pawpaw Fiesta*
Below: *Guava Exotica*



RAY DUNN

Guava exotica

2 mins

Standing time: none

8 drained canned guava halves*
50g / 2oz macaroons, crushed
50g / 2oz chopped Brazil nuts
25g / 1oz butter, softened
soft brown sugar to sprinkle

SERVES 4

1 Remove the pulpy centre flesh and pips from the guava halves and press through a sieve into a bowl. Add the macaroons, finely chopped Brazil nuts and softened butter and mix together well.
2 Place the guava halves on a large flat plate and fill the centre of each fruit with the mixture and sprinkle each with a little sugar.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until warmed through. Serve with pouring cream or Greek yoghurt.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use kiwifruit.

Two-way rice

Let the microwave / freezer combination make meals easier. Use the microwave to cook rice dishes in double quantities, eat one dish immediately and freeze the other to be reheated later.

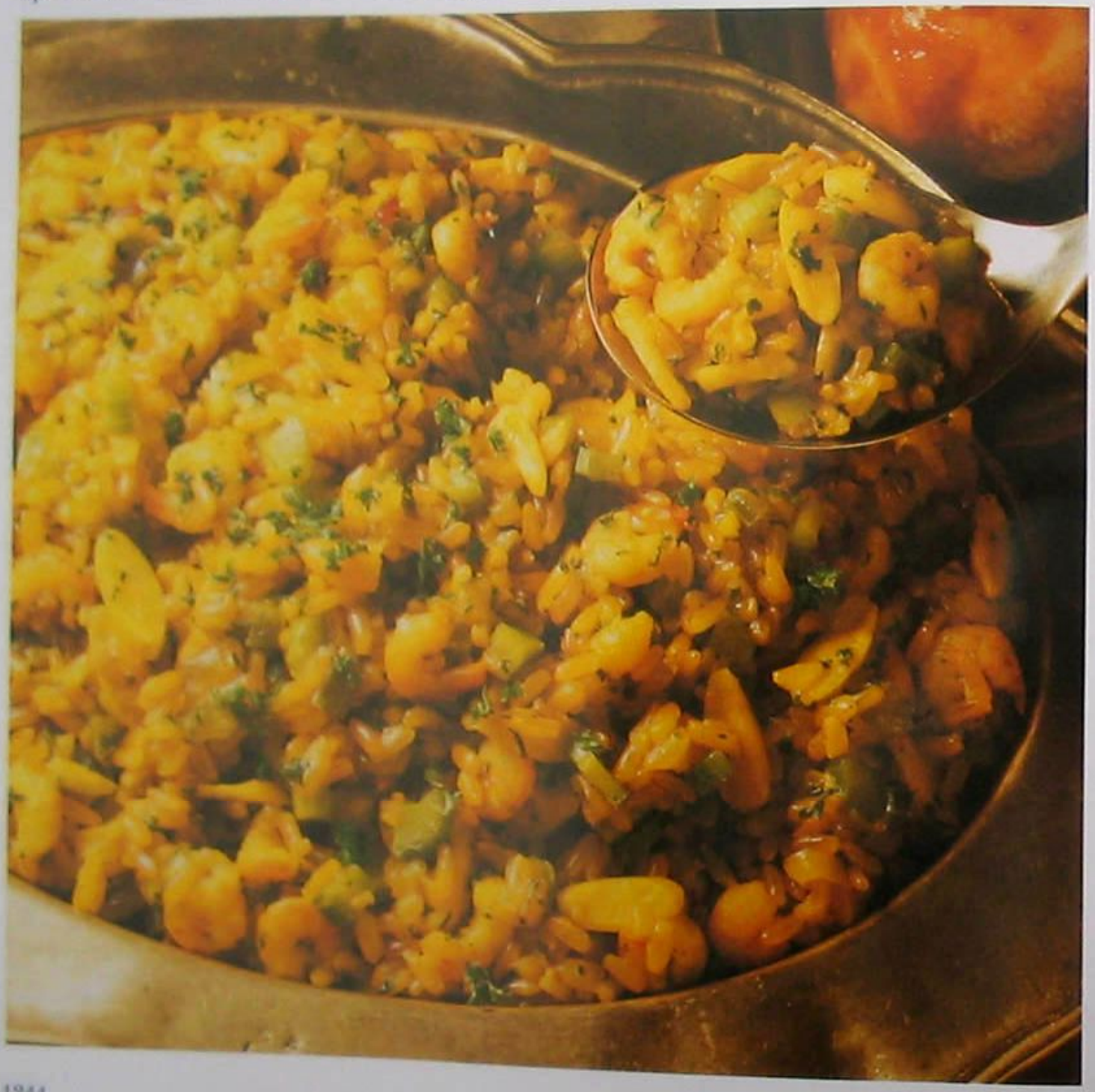
When putting together a colourful rice medley, why not double the quantities and make up two dishes — one to eat immediately and the other to freeze for later? This way you save time and energy and end up with two meals for the time taken to make one.

Cook the rice dish initially in the microwave, then transfer half to a second container and leave to cool. Serve the other half straight away as directed in individual recipes. For best results, remember to stir rice during cooking.

Freezing

Once cooled, leave the rice to chill in the refrigerator. When completely cold either pack in a rigid container or turn into a freezer bag and seal. Label, giving thawing

Pilau Rice



and heating instructions, if liked, so any member of the household can follow them as required. All these dishes can be stored successfully in the freezer for up to 3 months.

Thawing and heating

Rice dishes can be thawed and heated at 100% (High), but must be stirred and broken apart after half the time. Standing time is important for dishes that contain large pieces, such as chicken quarters or lamb cubes. Leave completely covered during standing to retain maximum heat. Fluff up with a fork before serving.

Pilau rice

20¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Thawing and reheating: 8 mins

50g / 2oz butter
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
5ml / 1tsp turmeric
1.1L / 2pt boiling chicken stock
450g / 1lb brown rice
200g / 7oz can shrimps, drained
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
50g / 2oz slivered almonds

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

Microtips

If using a polythene freezer container or bag for freezing rice, always transfer the rice to a microwave-safe serving dish for thawing and heating. If the rice is difficult to transfer, microwave for first two minutes in the freezer container, then transfer to a microwave-safe serving dish when loosened. Continue microwaving for time given in recipe. If preferred, use a freezer / microwave container for cooking, freezing, thawing and reheating.

How to microwave Pilau rice

Cover *and microwave the butter in a large casserole at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds. Stir in onion and celery, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, until tender.*

Stir *the turmeric into the boiling stock in a measuring jug. Add the rice to the casserole, stir in the stock, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir well.*

Reduce *power to 50% (Medium) for 12-15 minutes until rice is tender, stirring twice. Stir in the shrimps, chopped parsley and slivered almonds. Divide the dish in half.*

How to serve or freeze and serve Pilau rice

To serve *one dish immediately: cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes to complete cooking. Fluff up with a fork before serving.*

To freeze *one dish: leave to cool, then leave to chill completely in the refrigerator. Pack in freezer bag or rigid container, seal, label and freeze for no longer than 3 months.*

To thaw and serve: *unwrap; turn into a microwave dish or leave in dish if microwave safe. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, breaking apart once.*

Lamb pilaff

21 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Thawing and reheating: 8 mins

Standing after thawing: 3 mins

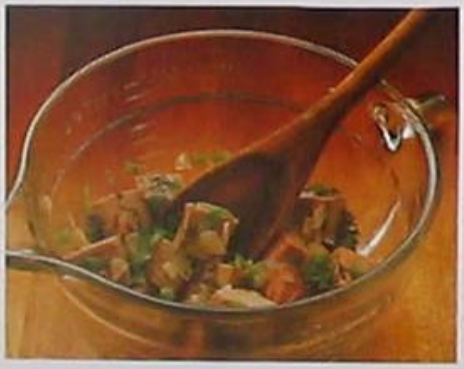
Serve this rice dish with a green or tomato salad.

350g / 12oz long-grain white rice
1.1L / 2pt boiling chicken stock
pinch of powdered saffron (optional)
salt and pepper
3 spring onions, chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried tarragon
450g / 1lb cooked lamb, cubed

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

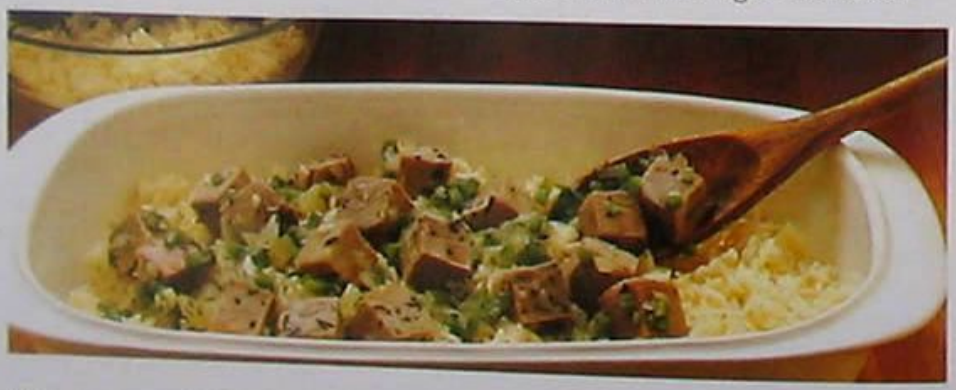
How to microwave Lamb pilaff

Combine *the rice, chicken stock, saffron, salt and pepper in a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 12-15 minutes until the rice is tender. Leave to stand, covered, for 5 minutes.*



Place *spring onions, pepper, garlic and oil in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes until pepper is tender. Stir in tarragon and lamb.*

Fluff up *rice with a fork. Spoon out half the rice and half the lamb mixture and combine in a casserole; cover. Set aside remaining rice and lamb.*



Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 3-6 minutes to heat and serve immediately. Combine the reserved lamb and rice and leave to cool. Pack, label and freeze up to 3 months. To thaw and reheat: unwrap, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, stirring once. Stand, covered for 3 minutes.*

Chicken and rice

23 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Thawing and reheating: 10 mins

Standing after thawing: 5 mins

2 onions, chopped
1 large green pepper, chopped
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
450ml / 1lb long-grain white rice
575ml / 1pt tomato juice
225g / 8oz frozen peas
Tabasco sauce, to taste
salt and pepper
8 chicken quarters
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika
20 stuffed olives, halved

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

1 Combine vegetables and oil in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes.
2 Stir in all ingredients except chicken, paprika and olives. Arrange chicken quarters on top, bony side up; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes.
3 Turn over chicken and rotate dish half a turn. Sprinkle with paprika, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes.
4 Remove chicken and stir olives into the rice. Divide the rice in half, arranging four chicken quarters on top of each half. Stand one dish, covered, for 5 minutes.
5 To freeze one dish: pack, label and freeze up to 3 months.

TO SERVE
Unwrap the frozen dish and turn with chicken on top; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes; stir rice and turn chicken once. Stand, covered, 5 minutes.

Chicken fried rice

22½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Thawing and reheating: 8 mins

15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
25g / 1oz butter
350g / 12oz long-grain white rice
575ml / 1pt boiling chicken stock
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
2 carrots, chopped
5-10ml / 1-2tsp soy sauce
450g / 1lb cooked chicken, cubed

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

1 Pre-heat a deep browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Swirl in oil and butter; add rice. Microwave at 100% (High) 30-60 seconds; stir once.
2 Stir in all remaining ingredients except chicken. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Stir well, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 12-15 minutes, until rice is tender; stir twice. Stand 5 minutes; fluff up.
3 Stir in the chicken and divide mixture in half. To serve immediately, microwave one dish at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes.
4 To freeze one dish: cool, pack, label and freeze up to 3 months.

TO SERVE
Unwrap the frozen Chicken Fried Rice and turn into a dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, stirring once.

Above: *Chicken and Rice*
Below: *Chicken Fried Rice*

Sweet 'n' sour pork

24 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Thawing and reheating: 8 mins

Standing after thawing: 3 mins

50g / 2oz soft brown sugar
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
125ml / 4fl oz cider vinegar
45ml / 3tbls soy sauce
425g / 15oz can pineapple chunks in natural juice, drained and juice reserved
900g / 2lb boneless pork, cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes
225g / 8oz long-grain white rice
230g / 8oz can water chestnuts, drained and sliced
1 large green pepper, cut into 6mm / ¼in strips
3 spring onions, chopped

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

1 In a large casserole, combine sugar, cornflour, vinegar, sauce and pineapple juice. Stir in pork and rice, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes.
2 Stir well, then reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 17-20 minutes, until rice is tender, stirring twice.
3 Add chestnuts and vegetables. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes; stir once.
4 Stir in pineapple and divide mixture in half. Stand one half, covered, for 5 minutes.
5 To freeze other dish; cool, pack and freeze up to 3 months.

TO SERVE
Unwrap frozen dish and turn out; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir, re-cover and microwave 3-5 minutes to heat. Stand, covered, 3 minutes.

Brown rice with vegetables

25¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Thawing and reheating: 8 mins

50g / 2oz butter
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
350g / 12oz brown rice
575ml / 1pt boiling chicken or vegetable stock
450g / 1lb frozen mixed vegetables
425g / 15oz can artichoke hearts, drained and halved
salt and pepper

MAKES 2 × 4 SERVINGS

Sweet 'n' Sour Pork

1 Place the butter in a large casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds. Stir in the mushrooms and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
2 Add the rice and stock, stir well, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 12-15 minutes, until rice is tender, stirring two or three times. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.
3 Place frozen vegetables in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes until just tender, stirring once; drain well.
4 Fluff up rice with a fork, then stir in vegetables and artichokes; season to taste. Divide in half and set half aside.
5 To serve one dish immediately; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until very hot, stirring once.
6 To freeze one dish; cool, pack, label and freeze up to 3 months.

TO SERVE
Unwrap the frozen dish and turn out; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes; stir once.

Beef: cubed and sliced

Buy prime beef — slice it, cube it or cut it in strips to make it go further and garnish with imagination. All these dishes are speedy to microwave and delicious to eat.

Since prime beef is so tender, it is one of the fastest meats to microwave.

Large steaks can be microwaved whole (see Part 21, page 572); but for a change, take thinly sliced steaks and cut into thick or thin strips or cubes. Prepared in this way, the meat goes much further than usual, especially when cooked in a sauce or with other ingredients.

Sirloin, rump or fillet steak are all suitable, but ask the butcher to slice the meat quite thinly. Minute steak, flash-fry or quick-fry steaks are often available from supermarkets. These steaks, although less tender than sirloin and fillet, have normally been pounded to tenderize them and work equally well in these recipes.

For beef strips, always slice meat across the grain. The strips or cubes can be microwaved simply in a casserole, but a browning dish will sear the meat, giving it a delicious flavour and texture.

Beef with Orange

PAUL WEBSTER

Beef in wine and cream

11 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

225g / 8oz mushrooms, halved
1 onion, chopped
25g / 1oz butter
700g / 1½lb sirloin steak, cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes
275ml / ½pt white wine
salt and pepper
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
45ml / 3tbls water
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
15ml / 1tbls tomato ketchup or sauce

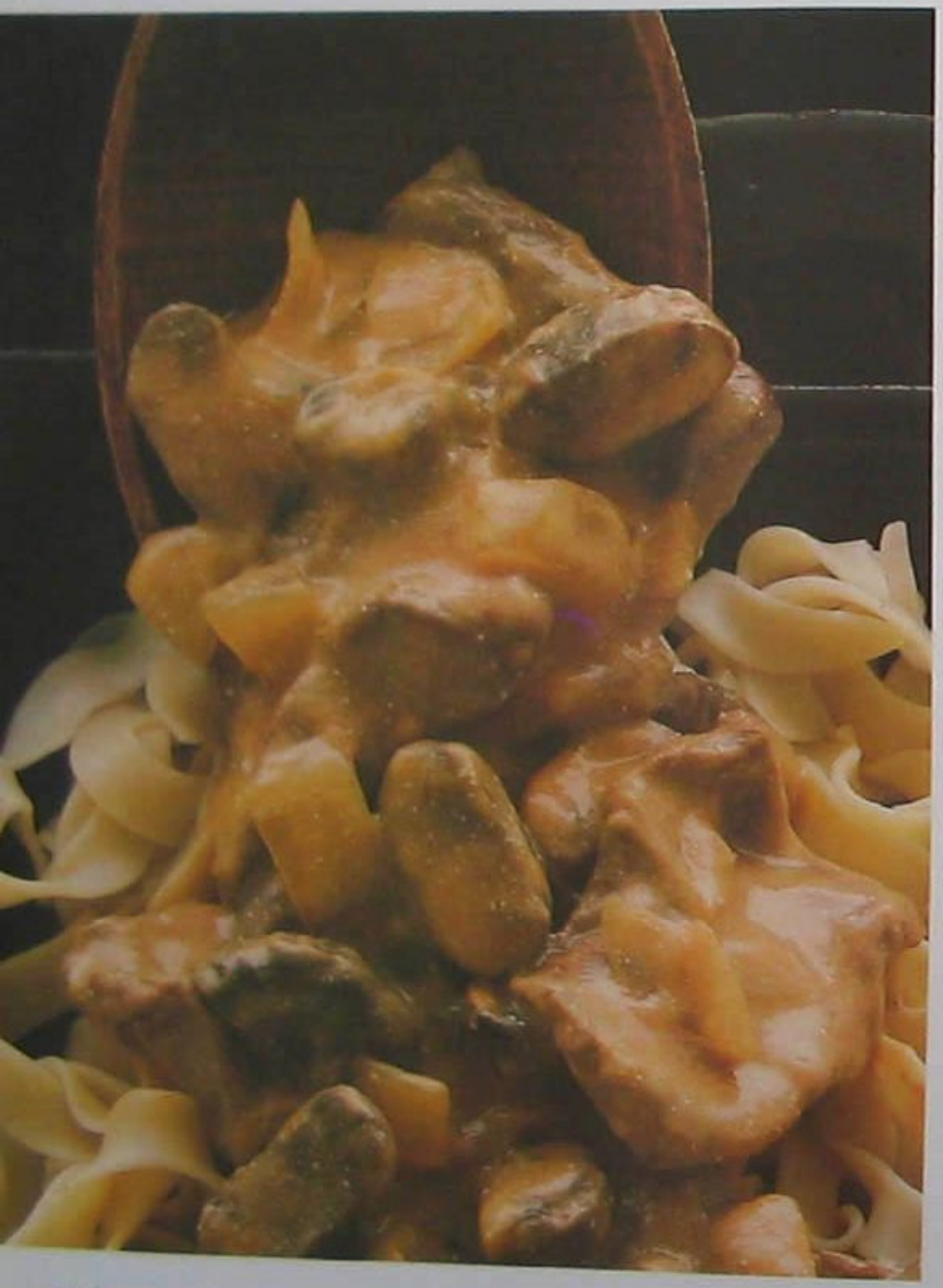
SERVES 6

1 Place mushrooms, onion and butter in a large casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until onion is tender.

2 Add beef, wine, salt and pepper and stir. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes or until beef is tender, stirring twice during cooking.

3 Blend flour and water and stir into casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until thickened, stirring two or three times.

4 Cover and stand for 3 minutes. Just before serving, add soured cream and tomato sauce, stirring to blend thoroughly.



Beef with orange

14½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb rump steak, thinly sliced and cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes
1 onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
100g / 4oz salted cashew nuts
1.5ml / ¼tsp gravy browning
watercress, to garnish

MARINADE
3 oranges
150ml / ¼pt red vermouth
1 garlic clove, crushed
pinch of salt

SERVES 4

1 Prepare the marinade. Thinly pare the zest from one orange and cut into long thin strips. Cut the orange in half and place in a casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, then squeeze juice into dish.

2 Cut away peel and pith from remaining oranges. Cut into segments and set aside. Drain juice from cut segments and add to casserole with the vermouth, garlic and salt. Stir in meat and marinate in refrigerator for 1-2 hours.

3 Drain beef, reserving the marinade and mix with the onion and oil. Blend cornflour with the reserved marinade.

4 Preheat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add meat and onions, stirring until sizzling stops. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until onion is tender and cooked.

5 Stir in the orange zest and reserved marinade. Microwave for a further 6-8 minutes or until meat is tender. Stir meat after 5 minutes cooking and stir in most of the orange segments, the cashew nuts and the gravy browning.

6 Stand for 3 minutes. Garnish with remaining orange segments and the watercress. Serve with plain rice, cooked conventionally.

Beef in Wine and Cream

Japanese-style beef

11 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb sirloin steak, thinly sliced, and cut into 12mm × 5cm / ½ × 2in strips
50ml / 2fl oz saké or dry sherry
30ml / 2tbls shoyu sauce
30ml / 2tbls chicken stock or water
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls water
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
2 small onions, sliced
225g / 8oz button mushrooms, sliced

SERVES 4

1 Mix steak, saké or sherry, shoyu sauce and stock in a deep bowl. Cover and marinate for 8 hours or overnight in a refrigerator.
2 Blend cornflour and water. Preheat a large browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add oil, meat and marinade and stir briskly until sizzling stops.
3 Add cornflour paste and stir well. Then stir in remaining ingredients. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes or until meat and onions are tender and sauce is glossy, stirring every 2 minutes. Stand for 3 minutes. Serve with crispy chow mein noodles or fried rice, cooked conventionally.

Cook's notes

Shoyu sauce is the Japanese equivalent of soy sauce. It is available from large supermarkets and delicatessens and in Oriental food stores. If you find it hard to come by, use soy sauce instead. Saké is also available from Oriental supermarkets as well as some off-licences.

Beef in tomato sauce

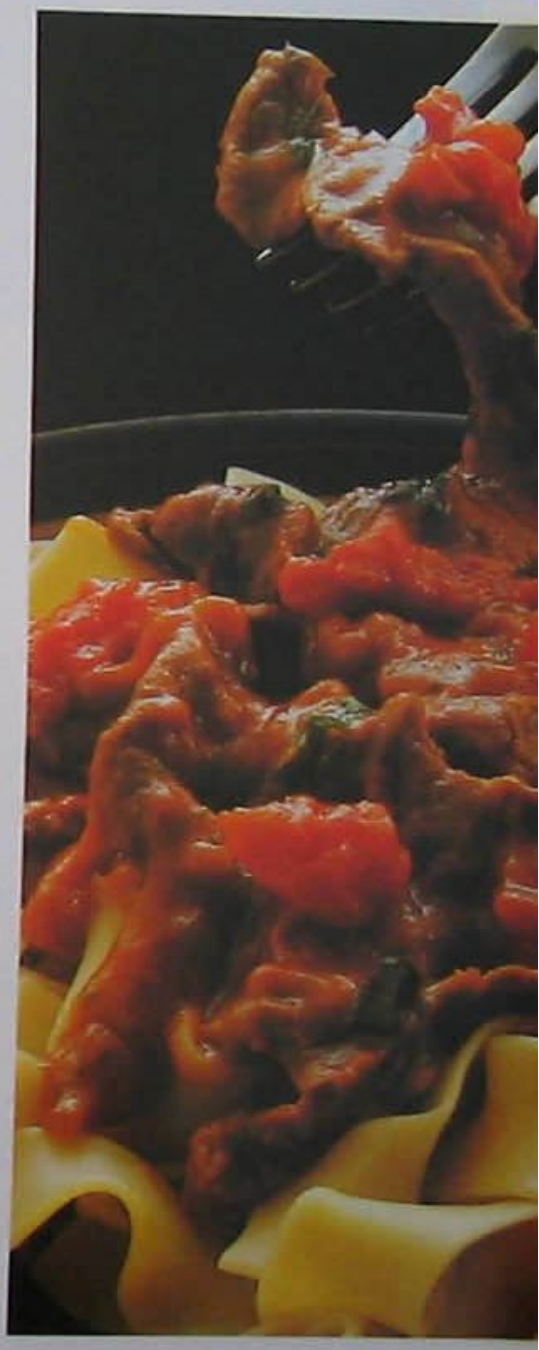
8 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

30ml / 2tbls plain flour
50g / 2oz packet onion soup mix
450g / 1lb quick-frying steak, cut into 12mm × 5cm / ½ × 2in strips
397g / 15oz can tomatoes
275ml / ½pt tomato juice
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4

1 Mix the flour and soup mix in a large casserole. Add steak and toss to coat evenly.
2 Chop tomatoes and add to casserole with tomato juice and parsley. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, stirring two or three times during cooking. Stand for 3 minutes.



Above: *Japanese-style Beef*
Right: *Beef in Tomato Sauce*

Stir-fried strips

9 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

450g / 1lb sirloin steak, thinly sliced and cut into 2.5 × 5cm / 1 × 2in strips
425g / 15oz can baby sweetcorn or 198g / 7oz can sweetcorn, drained
1 red pepper, seeded, cut in strips and then into diamonds

MARINADE
50ml / 2fl oz dark soy sauce
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
1 clove garlic, crushed

SERVES 4

1 Make the marinade: blend the soy sauce with cornflour, then gradually stir in oil. Add ginger and crushed garlic and stir.
2 Add the meat and marinate (see step 1 right).
3 Preheat a large browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Pour in both meat and marinade, (see step 2 below). Add remaining ingredients and stir.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes or until meat is tender stirring two or three times. Stand for 3 minutes. Serve with plain boiled rice, cooked conventionally.

Cook's notes

Marinated beef tastes particularly full of flavour, but all the ingredients need to blend really well to make the most of their richness. The oil is necessary to add fat to very lean meat.

How to marinate and microwave Stir-fried strips

Make *the marinade in a large bowl (see stage 1). Add the beef and stir well, to coat each slice. Marinate in refrigerator for 1 hour or at room temperature for 20-30 minutes.*

Preheat *the browning dish and when hot, pour in meat and marinade all at once, stirring briskly with chopsticks or a wooden spatula until sizzling dies down. Proceed as above.*

Beef in a bun

10 mins

Standing time: none

15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
1 onion, finely chopped
450g / 1lb quick-frying steaks, cut into 5cm / 2in-wide strips
60ml / 4tbls tomato juice
75ml / 3fl oz tomato ketchup or sauce
15ml / 1tbls Worcestershire sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder
salt
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
6 hamburger buns

SERVES 6

1 Preheat browning dish for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Mix oil, onion and steak and add to browning dish, stirring briskly until the sizzling stops.
2 Arrange beef slices in a single layer on base of dish and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Turn meat over and microwave for a further 1 minute.
3 Mix tomato juice and ketchup in a bowl. Add Worcestershire sauce, mustard, chilli powder, salt and flour, whisking well to blend.
4 Stir tomato mixture into dish with beef. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until sauce is hot.
5 Divide steak between the six buns, spooning a little sauce over meat. Serve immediately.

Microtips

A browning dish speeds up cooking and lends itself to stir-frying — perfect for recipes such as these with Oriental flavours. However, when using a browning dish, always check with your microwave manufacturer's handbook. Never pre-heat the dish longer than the recommended time as this can damage the glass turntable or glass plate cooker base. Some manufacturers recommend placing the browning dish on a special microwave trivet.

Gingered beef strips

7 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls water
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
12mm / ½in piece fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
450g / 1lb rump steak, cut into 12mm × 5cm / ½ × 2in strips
1 green pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
4 tomatoes, cut into wedges

SERVES 6

1 Blend soy sauce, water, cornflour, ginger, garlic and salt in a large casserole. Stir in steak and green pepper.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until meat and peppers are tender, stirring once.
3 Stir in tomato wedges. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes or until tomatoes are heated through. Cover and leave to stand for 3 minutes.

Above: *Beef in a Bun*
Right: *Gingered Beef Strips*

Squashes 1

Novel shapes and sizes make winter squashes fun to use. Just microwave in their skins and mash the flesh with tempting flavourings for some truly mouthwatering dishes.

Squashes come in many shapes and sizes and fall into two categories: winter and summer. Winter squashes have a hard skin and are cooked unpeeled. They take time to mature and keep for much longer than the summer squashes. The pumpkin is probably the best known of the winter squashes, and is featured in an article of its own later in this series.

Summer squashes have thinner skins, which are easily punctured with the fingernail and do not store for as long as the winter variety. They include courgettes, marrows and crooknecks.

Types of winter squashes

Acorn squashes are most commonly found after pumpkin and have a dark green skin with yellow, slightly sweet flesh. They are excellent for stuffing and baking. The **buttercup** squash is similar, although generally larger and rounder. The yellow **butternut** squash is pear shaped. It is good baked in a pie or puréed and served as a vegetable. The more mature specimens are tasty in preserves, pickles and jams.

The **Hubbard** squash is the largest variety of winter squash with thick, dark green skin. In pieces, it is good for stuffing, or serve peeled and mashed with sugar or syrup. **Spaghetti** squashes are so-named for their flesh, which resembles strands of spaghetti. They are cooked, seeded, then the flesh is removed and eaten with butter or tomato sauce and seasoning.

The **chayote**, or **choko,** is a tropical squash with one large edible seed and, like the winter squashes, can be cooked in its skin. Mash the flesh with butter or Parmesan cheese, or combine with curry-flavoured meat to make up a really tasty filling.

Cook's notes

If any of the squashes used in the recipes are difficult to find, try substituting with any winter squash, and microwave until tender as directed in the steps. Remember to prick the skin if cooking whole. Pumpkin is generally available, but is less sweet than the other squashes so, if using, add brown sugar.

Brown Sugar Squash

How to select and store squashes

Buy *whole squashes which feel hard and have no soft spots or cracks. A squash that is heavy for its size will have a thick wall of edible flesh. Tender shells indicate immaturity and poor eating and keeping qualities; avoid buying these and any that appear damaged or bruised.*

Unusual squashes *include the spaghetti squash, named after its long, thin strands of flesh; and the chayote or choko, which is pear shaped and coloured dark green through to white.*

Whole squashes *keep for between 3-6 months in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place.* Hanging them in net bags is ideal. Cover cut pieces and refrigerate in the crisper. Use as soon as possible.*

Brown sugar squash

12 mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

2 acorn squash (weighing about 700g / 1½lb each)

FILLING

45ml / 3tbls soft brown sugar
25g / 1oz butter
15ml / 1tbls chopped pecans or walnuts

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the squash as directed in the steps on page 1259. Remove the covering and mash the cooked flesh in the shell, using a fork.

2 Stir in the brown sugar and butter and sprinkle with the chopped nuts. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until filling is heated.

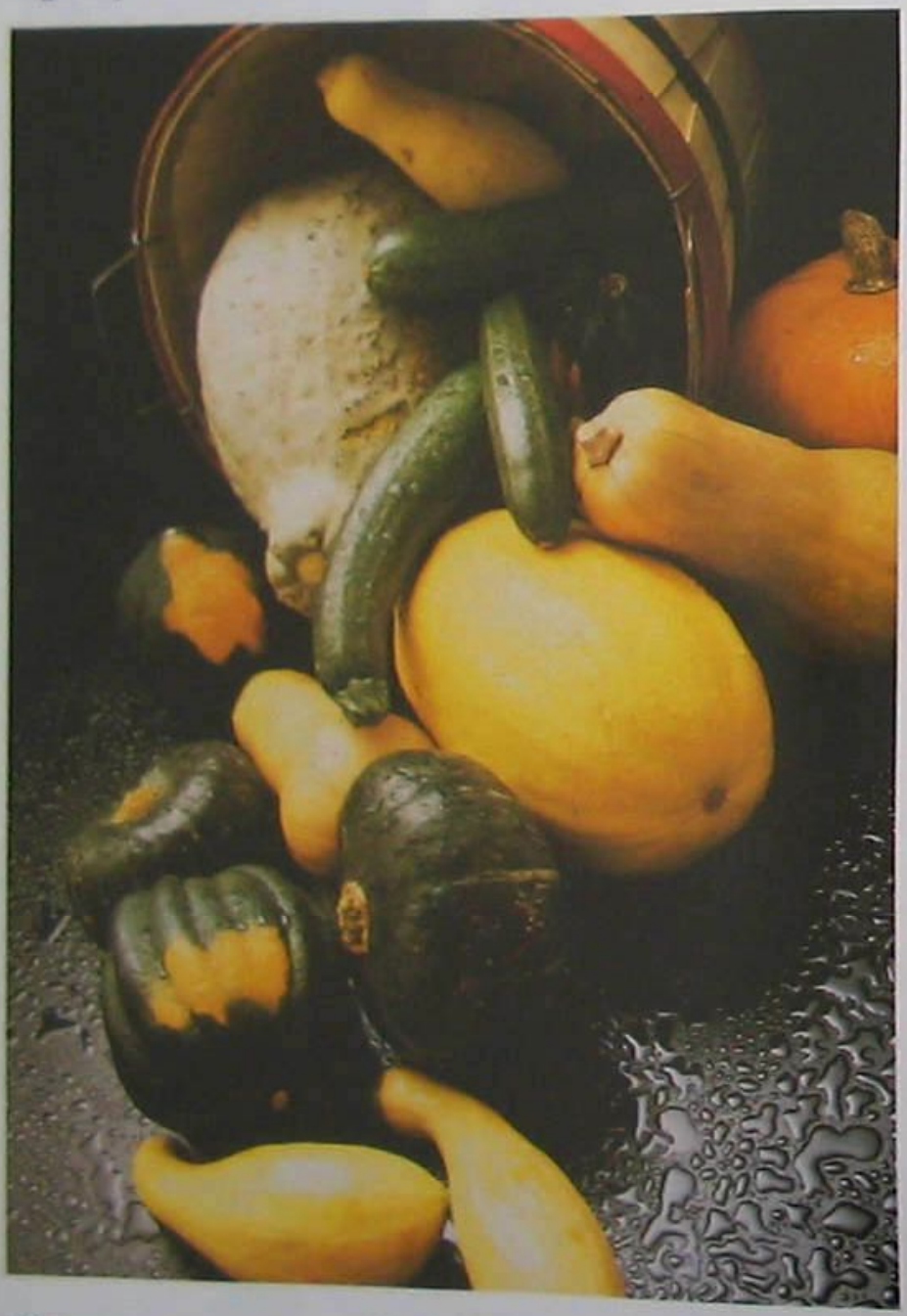
VARIATIONS

Apple sauce squash: prepare squash as directed, omitting filling ingredients. Stir 60ml / 4tbls canned apple sauce, 10ml / 2tsp honey, 15g / ½oz butter or margarine and a pinch of ground cinnamon and ground nutmeg into the mashed flesh in the shell. Microwave as directed to heat.

Sour cream squash: prepare squash as directed, omitting filling ingredients. Mix 15g / ½oz butter or margarine into the mashed flesh in the shell. Sprinkle with 15ml / 1tbls slivered almonds and a pinch of nutmeg. Heat, then top each half with 15ml / 1tbls soured cream.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Store squash in the refrigerator for about 1 week.

Key to squashes, below: 1 *Hubbard*, **2** *Courgettes*, **3** *Pumpkin*, **4** *Butternut*, **5** *Spaghetti*, **6** *Buttercup*, **7** *Acorn*, **8** *Crookneck*.
Right: *Squash Casserole*



Squash casserole

14¼ mins

Standing time: 5-6 mins

2 acorn squash
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine, cut into pieces
225g / 8oz can apple sauce
½ small onion, grated
salt
2.5ml / ½tsp ground allspice

TOPPING
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
2 shredded wheat cereal biscuits, crumbled
salt
5-7 drops Tabasco sauce

SERVES 4-6

1 Halve each squash lengthways. Scoop out seeds and fibres. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 11-14 minutes, or until fork tender, rearranging once or twice. Let stand for 3-4 minutes.
2 Scoop out flesh and place in a large bowl. Blend in the butter until smooth and butter is melted. Add apple sauce, onion, salt and allspice; transfer to a casserole.
3 For topping, place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds until melted. Stir in cereal, salt and Tabasco. Sprinkle over the casserole and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes. Let stand for 2 minutes before serving.

How to microwave spaghetti squash

Wash *the squash, then pierce deeply several times with a sharp knife to allow steam to escape during microwaving. Place on a piece of absorbent paper in the cooker.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes per 450g / 1lb, or until the squash can be pierced fairly easily with a skewer, turning once or twice. Let stand for 5 minutes.*

Halve *the squash crossways with a long knife. Scoop out the seeds and fibres and discard. Use a fork to twist out the long strands of flesh. Serve with butter and seasoning to taste.*

Fresh squash bread

9½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

200g / 7oz plain flour
30ml / 2tbls powdered milk
50g / 2oz sugar
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
40g / 1½oz butter
30ml / 2tbls chopped walnuts
15ml / 1tbls soft brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground allspice
225g / 8oz acorn squash, cooked and mashed (see steps, page 1259)
1 egg, lightly beaten
45ml / 3tbls orange juice
3.5ml / ¾tsp grated orange zest
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
30ml / 2tbls digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed
15ml / 1tbls desiccated coconut

MAKES 450g / 1lb LOAF

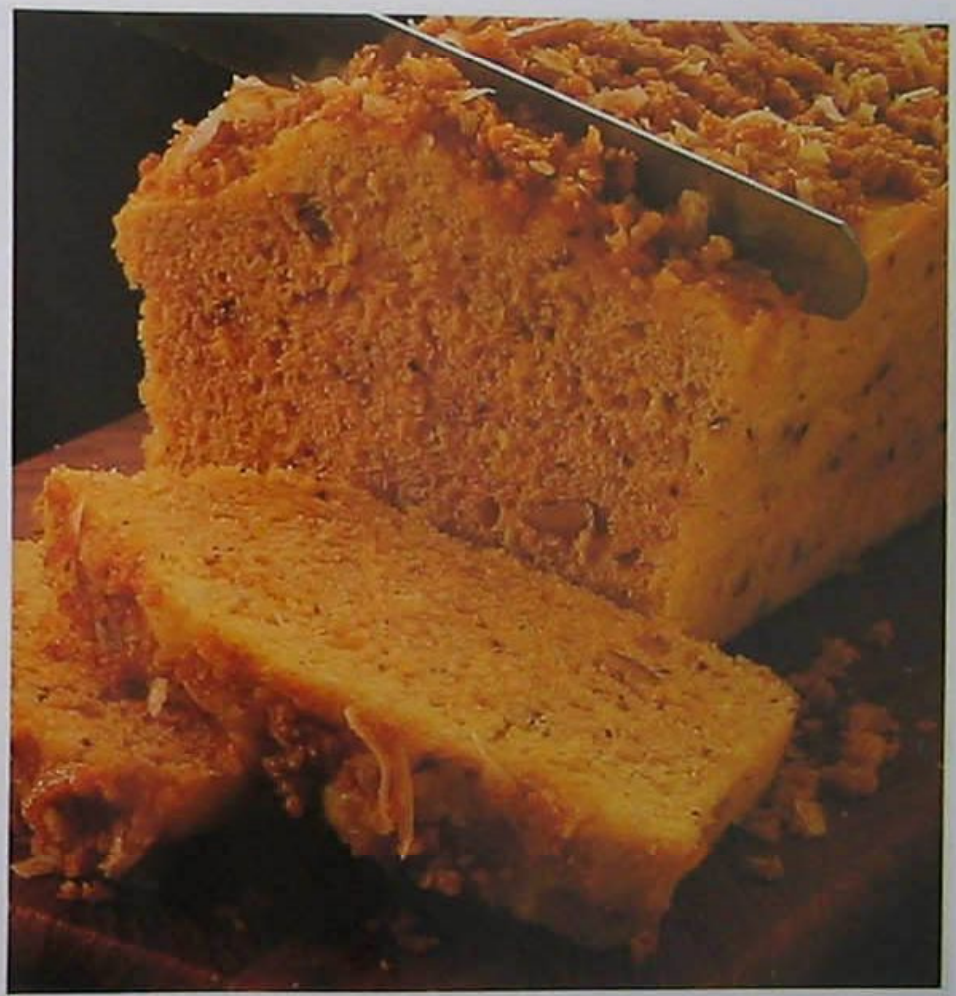
1 Sift together the flour, milk powder, sugar and baking powder in a bowl. Rub in the butter until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.

2 Line the base of a 450g / 1lb loaf dish with baking parchment. Combine the prepared mixture with the walnuts, sugar, allspice, squash, egg, orange juice and 2.5ml / ½tsp orange zest. Spread in the prepared loaf dish.

3 For the topping, microwave the butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds until melted. Add the biscuit crumbs, desiccated coconut and remaining orange zest; set aside.

4 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave bread for 3 minutes, rotating half a turn once. Sprinkle with the topping and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6-7½ minutes, or until a wooden cocktail stick inserted in the centre comes out clean; rotate dish quarter turn twice.

5 Let stand for 5 minutes before turning out. Eat within 2 days, wrapping and refrigerating any left over bread.



Fresh Squash Bread

Vegetarian stuffed squash

20½ mins

Standing time: none

This makes an excellent lunch dish or suppertime snack. Serve with wholemeal bread.

45ml / 3tbls apple juice
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
3.5ml / ¾tsp ground coriander
dash of ground cloves
175g / 6oz frozen mixed vegetables
100g / 4oz brown rice, cooked
225g / 8oz can black eyed or cannellini beans, drained
75g / 3oz sunflower seeds
90ml / 6tbls wheatgerm
2 large acorn or small buttercup squash (about 1.1kg / 2½lb each), cut in half

TOPPING
75g / 3oz cottage cheese
45ml / 3tbls plain yoghurt
2.5ml / ½tsp fresh lemon juice
large pinch of ground coriander

SERVES 4

1 Combine the apple juice, butter, coriander and cloves in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes until butter melts; stir. Set aside.
2 Turn the frozen vegetables out on to a plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until thawed; drain. Add to the apple juice mixture together with the cooked rice, beans, sunflower seeds and wheatgerm; mix well.
3 Remove and discard seeds from each squash half. Place cut-side down on turntable or large plate. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-20 minutes until tender, rearranging once.
4 Turn cut-side up and spoon rice mixture into the halves. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until heated, rearranging once.
5 Blend topping ingredients in a bowl and spoon over each squash half.

Vegetarian stuffed Squash

Microtips

Always remember to prick the skin of squashes several times when microwaving whole to prevent them exploding in the cooker.

Soften squash *to ease cutting. Place one 700g / 1½lb squash in the cooker and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until just warm to touch. Halve and remove seeds. Place butter and brown sugar in the cavity. Add chopped nuts, if liked. Cover each half and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8½ minutes, or until tender.*

How to microwave acorn squash

Wash *two 700g / 1½lb squashes and halve lengthways. If squash is hard to cut, microwave as directed in the step, above. Scoop out the seeds and membrane and discard.*

Cover *each squash half loosely and arrange in a circle in the cooker; place cut-side up, leaving equal space between each. Do not position one in the centre of the circle.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 11-14 minutes until tender; rotate once. Stand 3-4 minutes. Microwave two halves for 7-8½ minutes and one half for 4-5 minutes.*

How to microwave buttercup, butternut or Hubbard squash

Wash *squash and cut into 225g / 8oz pieces. Scoop out seeds and fibres and discard. When cooking one or two pieces, wrap each piece individually and place on cooker floor or plate.*

Arrange *four pieces in a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in or large baking dish. Cover loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes until tender when pressed with a fork.*

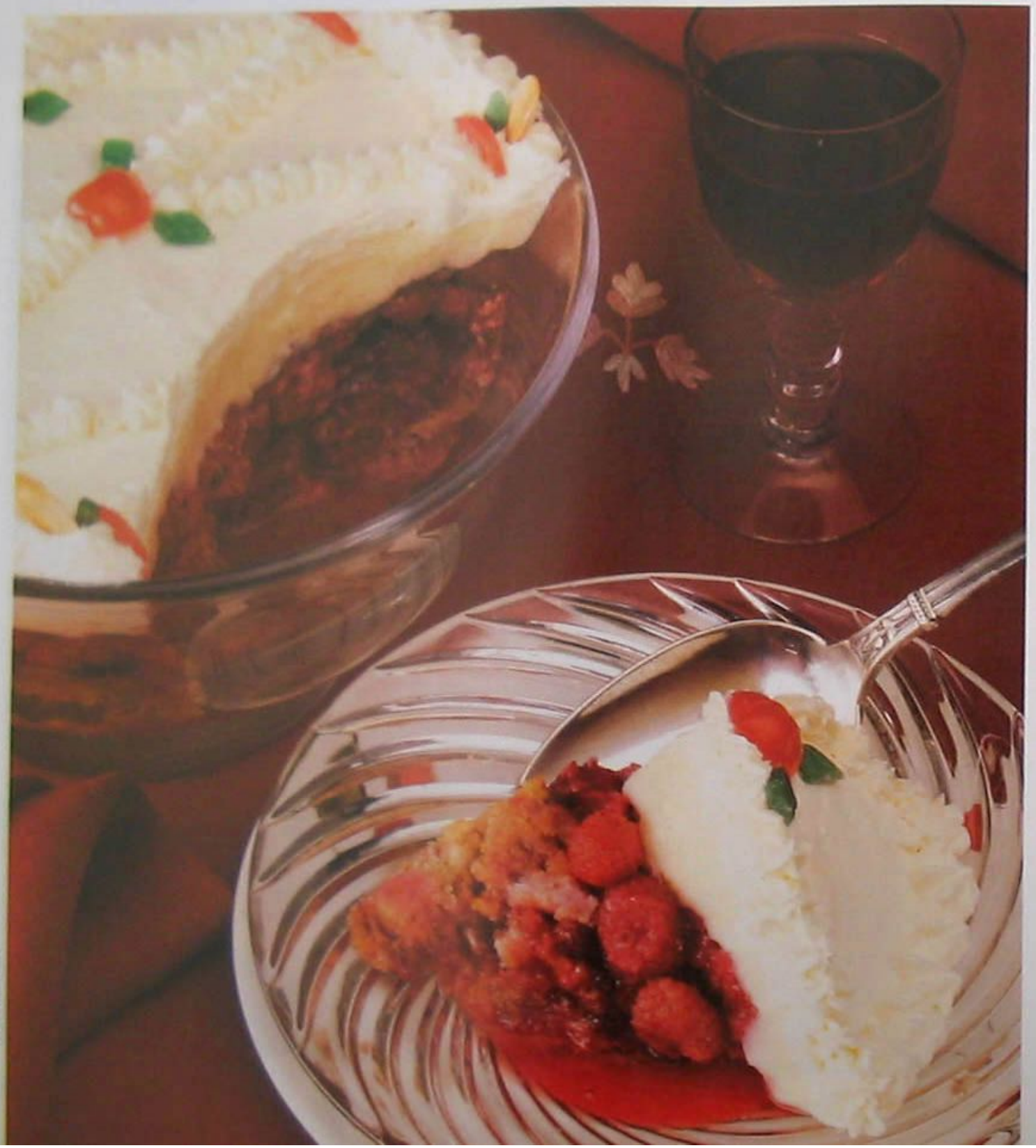
Rotate *and rearrange pieces once. Stand for 3-4 minutes. Microwave two pieces at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes. Serve in shell with butter and chopped walnuts.*

STAR RECIPE

Victorian trifle

A rich and delicious traditional trifle goes down well at any time — for a Sunday lunch or sophisticated dinner party dessert, or birthday tea — and the microwave makes it so easy.

There's no doubt that a luscious trifle remains a great favourite with everyone, for the flavours and textures of this mouthwatering dessert complement each other perfectly. At the base there's a layer of sponge cake and ratafias, soaked in sherry, spread with melted jam and then covered with raspberries to give a refreshing tang. This is balanced by a rich, velvety custard which in turn is set off with the gorgeous cream topping. Crisp toasted almonds, pieces of angelica and



PAUL WEBSTER

glacé cherries add pretty finishing touches.

For perfect trifle, the custard is all important, so use your microwave to produce a smooth and delicious mixture. Making custard in microwave style is easy and foolproof, as it does away with all the time-consuming, but essential stirring that is required when making a stirred egg custard in the conventional way. The microwave is also invaluable for simplifying other stages of trifle-making — for example, use it for melting the jam and for thawing the frozen raspberries.

If you've time, make the trifle the day before it's needed — it's so much nicer and allows time for all the flavours to mingle. Remember always to serve trifle well chilled.

Victorian trifle

6 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz plain sponge cake
25g / 1oz ratafias
75ml / 5tbls sherry or Madeira
75ml / 5tbls strawberry or seedless raspberry jam
450g / 1lb frozen raspberries
45ml / 3tbls caster sugar
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
275ml / ½pt milk
2 egg yolks, beaten
15g / ½oz butter
2.5ml / ½tsp almond flavouring
275ml / ½pt double cream
15g / ½oz flaked almonds, toasted
3 glacé cherries, halved
angelica leaves

SERVES 6

Microtips

To thaw frozen raspberries, arrange in a shallow dish, cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4-5 minutes, stirring once, very gently. Stand for 10 minutes.

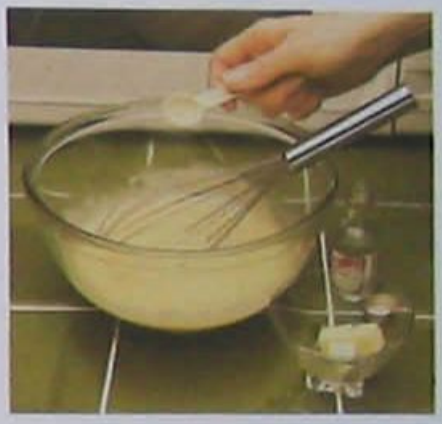
Use orange juice thawed in the microwave (see Part 22, page 589) and made up directed, in place of sherry. Replace the ratafias with coarsely broken shortbread.

How to microwave Victorian trifle

Cut *the sponge cakes into pieces and arrange in the base of a large glass serving bowl. Add the ratafias, then spoon over the sherry and leave to soak for at least 15 minutes.*

Microwave *the jam at 100% (High) for 20-30 seconds, until melted, and spread evenly over sponge cake. Thaw raspberries (see Microtips) and arrange in dish.*

Mix *30ml / 2tbls of the sugar and the cornflour in a bowl and blend in milk gradually. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4 minutes until thick. Stir twice during cooking until smooth.*



Whisk *a little of the hot mixture into beaten egg yolks. Then whisk this into the hot custard. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes. Whisk in butter and almond flavouring.*

Cool *custard slightly and pour over the raspberries in the dish. Leave to cool completely. Whisk the cream with 15ml / 1tbls sugar and spread half the cream over the custard.*

Place *the remaining cream in a piping bag fitted with a star pipe and pipe a lattice over the top. Decorate with the almonds, cherries and angelica. Chill for at least 1 hour before serving.*

Quick continental soups

Made in minutes in your microwave, these hearty soups from around the world are deliciously warming and give many a satisfying meal an international appeal — so take your pick!

Everyone enjoys a bowl of piping hot, nourishing soup — and every country has its particular favourite. The recipes here are a selection of the best from around Europe and combine an assortment of interesting ingredients that include fresh as well as store-cupboard items.

There is no mystery about making good speedy soups in the microwave — and provided you follow a few simple guidelines you will have successful results.

Cut the vegetables in uniform-size pieces to ensure they cook evenly. Remember to add denser vegetables such as parsnips, at the start of cooking time and less

French Watercress Soup

dense ones, such as broccoli, towards the end — this way you can be sure that all vegetables will be cooked to perfection at the finish. Remember, too, that frequent stirring during the cooking process helps ensure that the entire mixture cooks and heats evenly.

To make a bowl of soup even more substantial, serve it with warm rolls (see Microtips, right), wholewheat or bran crackers or chunky slices of crusty granary bread. If liked, sprinkle a little grated Cheddar cheese over bowls of hot soup just before serving.

French watercress soup

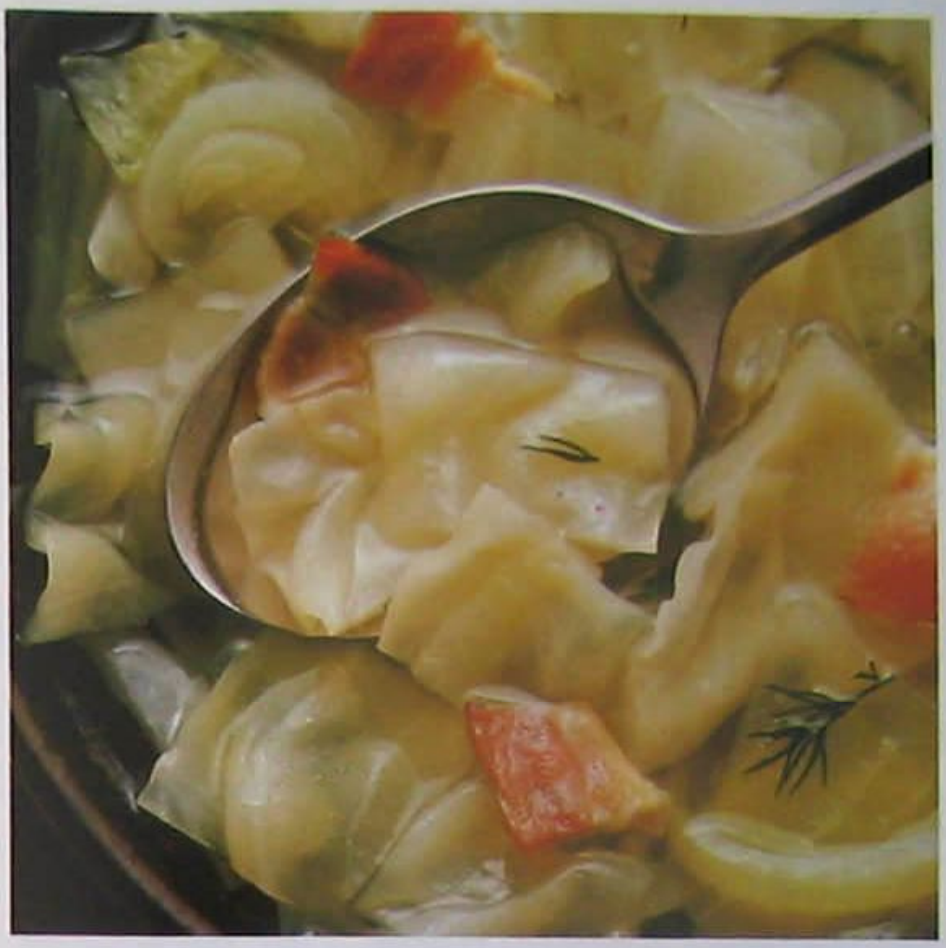
12½ mins

Standing time: none

425ml / 15fl oz water
68g / 2½oz packet instant potato
1 small onion, grated
1 large bunch watercress, chopped
50g / 2oz butter
425ml / 15fl oz milk
1 chicken stock cube, crumbled
45-60ml / 3-4tbls double cream
salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the water in a bowl at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes until boiling. Stir in the instant potato and continue stirring to make a smooth purée. Reserve.
2 Combine the finely chopped onion, watercress and butter in a bowl; cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes stirring once.
3 Add the milk and stock cube to the watercress, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 3-4 minutes, stirring once.
4 Cool slightly. Pour into a blender and process until smooth.
5 Blend the watercress mixture into the potato purée, stirring all the time to form a smooth, well-combined mixture.
6 Stir 2 tablespoons of the cream in to the soup, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes without boiling. Season.
7 Swirl the remaining cream into the soup just before serving, garnish with sprigs of watercress.



German Cabbage Soup

German cabbage soup

20 mins

Standing time: none

2 rashers streaky bacon, rinded and chopped
350g / 12oz white cabbage, chopped
1 onion, thinly sliced
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried dill
1.5ml / ¼tsp caraway seeds (optional)
salt and pepper
700ml / 1¼pt chicken stock

SERVES 4

1 Place bacon in a large bowl, cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until cooked.
2 Add the prepared cabbage, onion, herbs and seasonings and 275ml / ½pt of the stock to the bowl. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes stirring twice.
3 Stir in the remaining stock, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 10-12 minutes until the soup is hot and the vegetables are tender, stirring twice.

VARIATION
Add a little cider vinegar for an authentic German 'sauer' flavour.

Cook's notes

A warming winter soup that is good with some sliced boiling sausage added to the mixture at stage 3. Delicious, too, served with rye or wholewheat bread. Add a piece of cheese for a quick, balanced meal.

Microtips

To warm a crusty or soft roll in the microwave, wrap the roll in a paper napkin and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-15 seconds. If liked, spread the warm roll with softened cream or cottage cheese before serving.

Swiss-style onion soup

21 mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
1 large onion, thinly sliced
700ml / 1¼pt hot water
1 beef stock cube, crumbled
2.5ml / ½tsp Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper
4 slices bread, toasted
50g / 2oz Gruyère cheese, grated
20ml / 4tsp grated Parmesan
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4

VARIATIONS
Why not try slices of toasted rye or wholewheat bread for a change?

How to microwave Swiss-style onion soup

Combine *the butter or margarine and the thinly sliced onion in a large bowl or casserole dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes or until the onions are tender and translucent. Stir the mixture twice during cooking. Add the water, crumbled stock cube and the Worcestershire sauce and mix all the ingredients well together.*

Re-cover *and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until boiling. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and cook for 5 minutes; stir once. Season to taste.*

Divide *the soup mixture evenly between four individual soup bowls. Place a slice of toast on top of each one (see Variations above, for some unusual ideas). Scatter the grated Gruyère cheese on top of the slices of toast and sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese. Add a sprinkling of fresh chopped parsley to each one. Place bowls of soup in the microwave.*

Microwave *bowls of soup, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until soup is piping hot and the cheese topping melts. Rearrange bowls after half the cooking time.*

Napoli soup

15 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz minced beef
25g / 1oz streaky bacon, rinded and chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
50g / 2oz green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
400g / 14oz can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed (see Cook's notes, page 1267)
1 garlic clove, crushed
700ml / 1¼pt beef stock
10ml / 2tsp tomato purée or paste
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place beef in a 2.3L / 4pt bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, or until meat is no longer pink, stirring once during cooking. Place on one side.
2 Combine bacon, onion and green pepper in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes until vegetables are tender.
3 Add the cooked vegetables to the meat with the beans, garlic, stock and tomato purée. Cover bowl with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, or until the soup is piping hot, stirring twice. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Flemish pea and ham soup

15 mins

Standing time: none

1 potato, diced
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
4 rashers streaky bacon, rinded and chopped
248g / 10oz can mushy processed peas*
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
575ml / 1pt water
1 chicken stock cube, crumbled
50g / 2oz cooked ham, diced
2.5ml / ½tsp dried thyme
2.5ml / ½tsp dried parsley
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Combine the potato, onion, celery and bacon in a large bowl, cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes until tender stirring twice.
2 Mix the processed peas into the vegetables. Blend the cornflour smoothly with a little of the water, add to the vegetables in the bowl with the remaining water, stock cube, ham and herbs.
3 Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 9 minutes until soup is hot, thick and creamy, stirring twice. Season the hot soup to taste with salt and pepper.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use the same size can of peas and then mash in food processor.

Spanish soup

15 mins

Standing time: none

1 small onion, finely chopped
4 rashers streaky bacon, rinded and chopped
1 potato, diced
432g / 15oz can chick peas, drained and rinsed
227g / 8oz can tomatoes
575ml / 1pt strong chicken stock
1-2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 bay leaf
salt and pepper

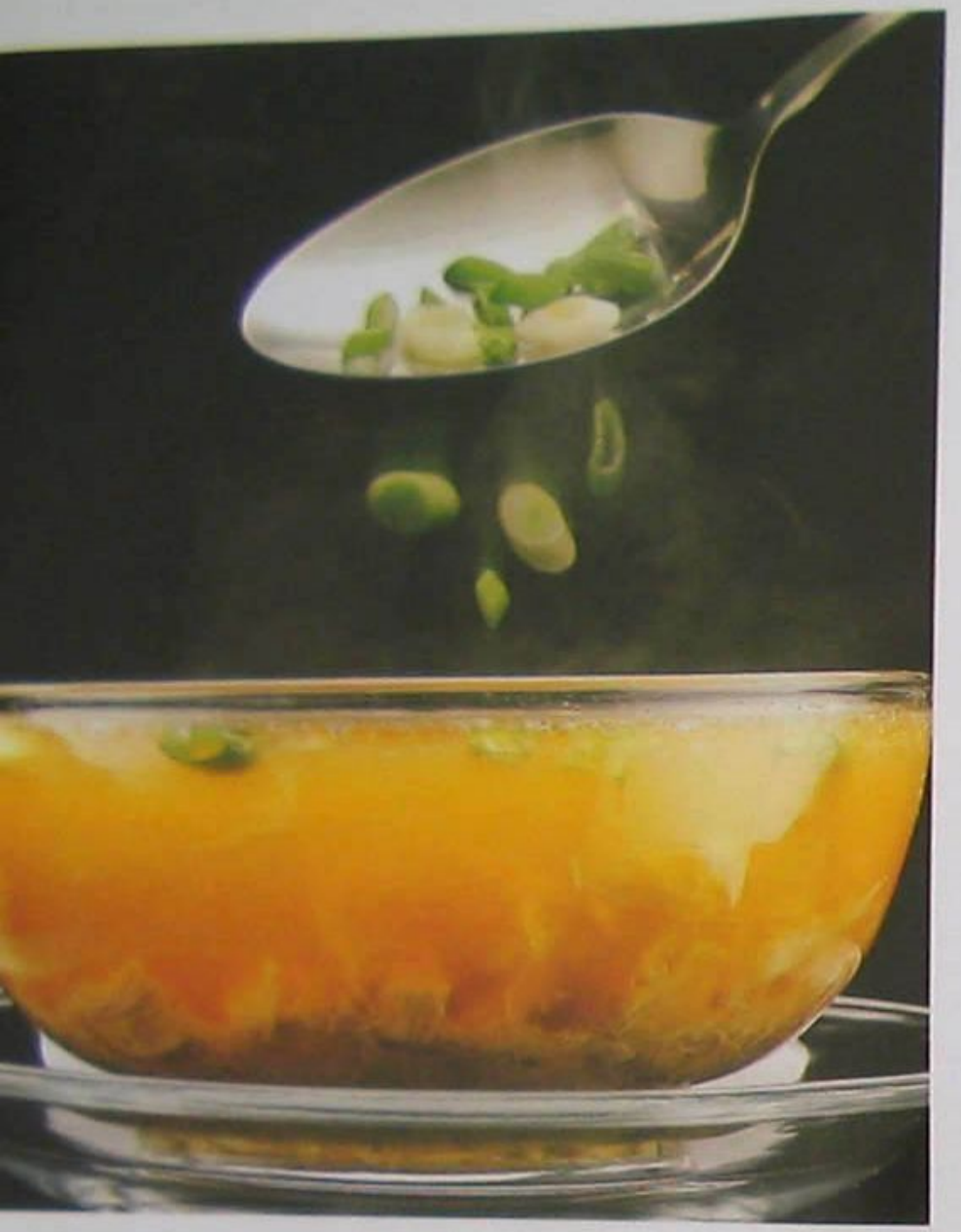
SERVES 4

1 Place onion, bacon and potato in a large bowl, cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until the vegetables are tender, stirring twice.
2 Add the chick peas to the vegetables with the tomatoes, stock, bay leaf and garlic. Stir well to combine ingredients.
3 Cover soup with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes or until soup is piping hot, stirring twice. Season to taste.

Microtips

Take care when removing the cover from any hot soup to avoid being scalded by steam. Wear oven gloves and open away from you.

From left to right: *Napoli Soup, Flemish Pea and Ham Soup and Spanish Soup*



Ukrainian borsch

18 mins

Standing time: none

1 large onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed or finely chopped
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
1 large carrot, cut into matchsticks
25g / 1oz butter
100g / 4oz white cabbage, finely shredded
450g / 1lb cooked beetroot, cut into matchsticks
15ml / 1tbls sugar
850ml / 1½pt stock, preferably ham, or boiling water
225g / 8oz can chopped tomatoes
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
salt and pepper to taste

GARNISH
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
150ml / ¼pt soured cream

SERVES 4

1 Combine onion, garlic, celery, carrot and butter in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Add cabbage and beetroot. Stir in sugar and boiling stock or water. Replace vented cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes.
3 Stir in the tomatoes and purée and check seasoning. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes.
4 Taste and adjust seasoning. Be especially careful of the salt if you have used ham stock. Pour into bowls and serve with a swirl of soured cream and a sprinkle of chopped parsley.

Greek egg and lemon soup

10 mins

Standing time: none

A particularly flavoursome soup that can be made almost instantly. The cooked chicken is not essential, but does improve the flavour.

1 small onion, finely chopped
50g / 2oz cooked chicken, skinned and diced
700ml / 1¼pt water
2 chicken stock cubes, crumbled
1 egg
juice of ½ lemon
chopped spring onions, or chopped chives, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Combine the onion, chicken, water and stock cubes in a large bowl. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes or until almost boiling; stirring twice.
2 Beat the egg with the lemon juice and blend in a little of the hot soup. While stirring all the time, gradually add the blended egg mixture back to the soup, stirring continuously.
3 Serve soup immediately, sprinkle with a little chopped spring onion or chives if liked.

Left: *Greek Egg and Lemon Soup*
Below: *Italian Clam Soup*

Italian clam soup

12 mins

Standing time: none

4 rashers streaky bacon, rinded and chopped
1 potato, diced
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
15ml / 1tbls oil
290g / 10oz can baby clams
330ml / 11½fl oz can tomato and vegetable juice
15ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
1 garlic clove, crushed
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 In a large bowl, combine the bacon, potato, onion, celery, green pepper and the oil. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until vegetables are soft.
2 Drain the clams, reserving juice in a measuring jug. Add the tomato and vegetable juice to the clam liquor and make up to 700ml / 1¼pt with water or wine, see Variations.
3 Add the clams, herbs, garlic and liquid to the vegetables. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes or until soup is piping hot, stirring twice. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Dutch Pea Soup

VARIATIONS
Red or white wine can be used instead of water to make up the liquid quantity. Mussels can be used instead of clams.

Cook's notes

If recipes include pulses, such as Napoli Soup and Spanish soup on page 1265, add salt at the end of cooking time to stop the beans becoming tough.

Dutch pea soup

14 mins

Standing time: none

1 potato, diced
1 onion, finely chopped
439g / 15.5oz can pease pudding
575ml / 1pt chicken stock
300g / 10.5oz can sliced carrots, drained
50g / 2oz cooked ham, diced

SERVES 4

1 Place the potato and onion in a large bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes or until tender.
2 Blend the pease pudding smoothly with the stock and add to the vegetables in bowl with the carrots and ham. Re-cover bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes or until soup is hot, stirring twice.

VARIATION
The soup can be enriched by replacing half the stock with milk.

Microtips

For speed and to save on the washing up, microwave and serve the soup in a non-metallic tureen.

Plan ahead: menu 1

With your freezer and microwave partnership you can prepare a whole meal in advance. The microwave does the thawing and reheating in minutes, leaving you free to relax with your guests.

With just a little forward thinking you can have a first-class dinner party stored away in your freezer, ready to produce with the minimum fuss. The microwave /freezer combination is perfect for this.

Choosing a menu

The secret of a freezer menu is to select dishes that both freeze well and do not need to be thawed and heated in the microwave at the same time. This Italian-style meal fits the bill perfectly.

As vegetables cook so well in the microwave, the Antipasto Salads are an excellent idea for a starter. The flavoursome pasta sauce is simple to microwave and freeze, as is the rich, dark chocolate sauce for ice cream. The only part of the meal that is not frozen is the salad.

Freezing

Pack each dish in separate containers or freezer bags and label clearly. It may be helpful to label each item 'Menu 1' or 'Italian meal' and note down thawing instructions. Then the food can be easily identified and menu timing worked out in advance.

Menu planning

The Antipasto Salads are eaten cold, so can be thawed out before guests arrive. The mixed salad dressing can also be made in advance; prepare the salad, then toss in the dressing just before serving. About 15 minutes before the meal, microwave the spaghetti sauce. The sauce retains its heat well for 10 minutes, if it is covered. Cook the pasta conventionally; add a knob of butter and keep covered. When the main course is finished, soften the ice cream at 20-30% (Defrost) for a few seconds. Microwave the chocolate sauce while scooping the ice cream.

Cook's notes

The recipe time boxes refer to microwaving before freezing. The first standing time refers to standing after initial cooking.

Antipasto salads

11 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing time: 20 mins

Standing after thawing: 9 mins

GREEN BEAN SALAD
275g / 10oz cut green beans
30ml / 2tbls water

DRESSING
15ml / 1tbls white wine vinegar
45ml / 3tbls olive oil
pinch of dried rosemary or basil
salt and pepper

CAULIFLOWER SALAD
275g / 10oz cauliflower florets
30ml / 2tbls water

DRESSING
15ml / 1tbls white wine vinegar
45ml / 3tbls olive oil
pinch of dried oregano
salt and pepper

CARROT SALAD
275g / 10oz carrots, cut into 5cm / 2in julienne strips
30ml / 2tbls water

DRESSING
15ml / 1tbls white wine vinegar
45ml / 3tbls olive oil
2.5ml / ½tsp chopped fennel
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

Antipasto Salads

RAY DUNS

How to microwave Antipasto salads

Place *the beans and water in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes until tender. Rinse in cold water, drain and toss in dressing.*

Put *cauliflower and water in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until almost tender; drain. Toss in dressing while hot.*

Combine *carrots and water in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until just tender. Toss in dressing while still hot.*

How to freeze and thaw Antipasto salads

Cool *each salad, then chill in refrigerator. Transfer to separate freezer containers or bags. Seal, label and freeze no longer than 1 month.*

To thaw *green bean and cauliflower salads: microwave each in a bowl at 20-30% (Defrost) for 6-8 minutes; break up twice. Stand 3 minutes.*

Repeat *with carrot salad, but microwave for 8-10 minutes at 20-30% (Defrost). Arrange salads on serving plate; garnish with olives.*

Cook's notes

It is important to rinse the blanched beans in cold water immediately after cooking to ensure they retain their colour during freezing. Toss the other vegetables in dressing while they are still hot so they absorb maximum flavour.

Freezer notes

Pour the spaghetti sauce in a freezer bag, positioned in the container to be used on thawing. Cool then open-freeze until solid; remove container. Return to container to thaw, turning out of bag when loosened.

Italian spaghetti sauce

38 mins

Standing time: none

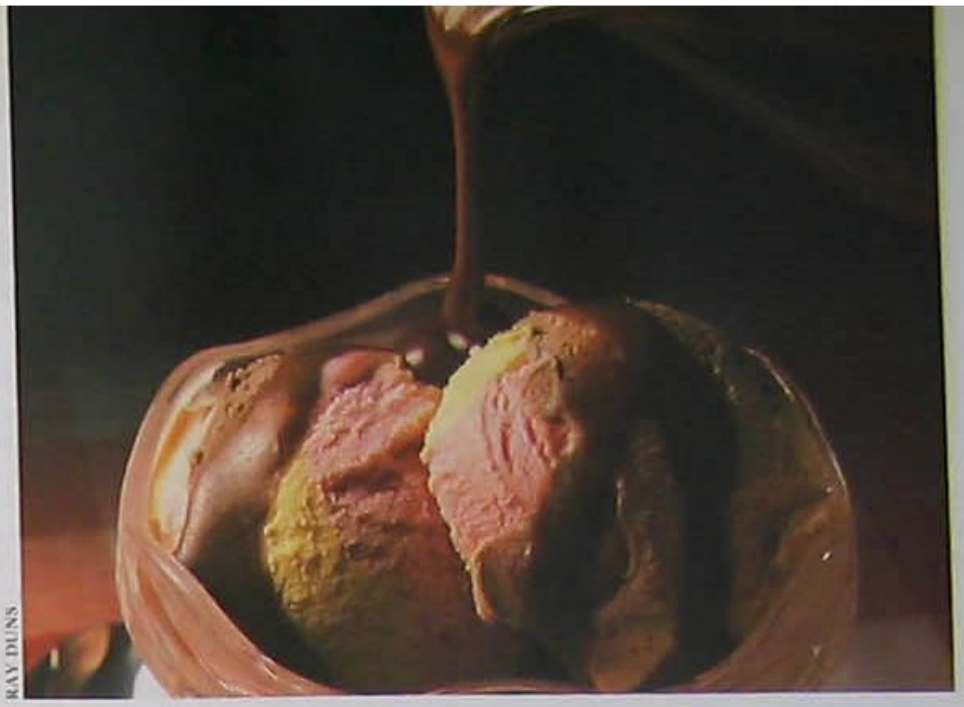
Thawing and reheating: 30 mins

350g / 12oz lean minced beef
225g / 8oz spicy Italian sausage, skinned
1 onion, chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
500ml / 17fl oz Italian puréed tomatoes
397g / 14oz can plum tomatoes
150ml / ¼pt red wine
45ml / 3tbls tomato paste
1 bay leaf
5ml / 1tsp dried oregano
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
5ml / 1tsp sugar
salt

SERVES 6

1 Crumble the minced beef and sausage into a large bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, or until the meat is no longer pink, stirring once or twice. Drain and set aside.
2 In a separate bowl, mix together the onion, green pepper, garlic and olive oil. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. Add to the meat together with remaining ingredients. Stir, then microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 8 minutes; stir.
3 Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) for 20-30 minutes or until sauce is rich and thick, stirring twice. Remove bay leaf.
4 To freeze: transfer sauce to freezer container or bag (see Freezer notes, opposite); cool. Cover, seal and label. Freeze up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Turn the sauce out into a casserole. Cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 25-30 minutes, breaking up several times. Uncover and increase power to 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, stirring once. Serve over spaghetti.



RAY DUNS

Left: *Italian Spaghetti Sauce*

Tossed mixed salad

30 secs

Standing time: none

60ml / 4tbls Italian salad dressing
5ml / 1tsp dried oregano
1 crisp lettuce, torn into pieces
3 tomatoes, cut in wedges
½ small cucumber, sliced
6 radishes, sliced

SERVES 6

1 Combine the salad dressing and oregano and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds until hot.
2 Prepare all the remaining ingredients and place in a large bowl. Toss in the salad dressing just before serving.

VARIATION
Make up your own dressing, if preferred, with 45ml / 3tbls olive oil, 15ml / 1tbls red wine vinegar, ½ garlic clove, crushed, 2.5ml / ½tsp mustard, 5ml / 1tsp dried oregano, and salt and pepper to taste.

Amaretto chocolate sauce

6 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 7 mins

150g / 5oz demerara sugar
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
25g / 1oz cocoa powder, sifted
30ml / 2tbls Amaretto liqueur

Amaretto Chocolate Sauce

225ml / 8fl oz water
150ml / ¼pt milk
50g / 2oz butter, cut into small pieces
15ml / 1tbls golden syrup

MAKES 425ml / ¾pt

1 Combine the sugar, flour and cocoa in a bowl. Stir in the remaining ingredients and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, stirring after 2 minutes, then once or twice until thick and smooth.
2 To freeze: pour the sauce into a rigid freezer container and allow to cool. When cool, cover, seal and label. Freeze up to 3 months.

TO SERVE
Uncover, turn into a bowl and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3-4 minutes, until it is no longer icy and possible to stir. Stir, then increase power to 70% (Medium-High) for 4-5 minutes until bubbling hot; stirring once or twice. Serve over any flavoured ice cream.

VARIATIONS
For a different flavour, replace the Amaretto with coffee liqueur, brandy or dark rum.

For a non-alcoholic sauce, add 30ml / 2tbls made up strong black coffee or 30ml / 2tbls fresh orange juice in place of the liqueur. Add a few drops of vanilla or almond flavouring.

Low salt cooking

Adding salt to microwaved food can smother the flavour rather than enhance it — so improve your food and your health and start shaking the salt habit!

A daily intake of salt (also called Sodium Chloride) is vital to maintain the body's fluid balance.

There are two main sources of salt, that which is added to food during or after the cooking process and that which is added by manufacturers of processed foods.

Most fresh ingredients, like meat and vegetables, are low in salt, but this is added during processing. Foods such as bacon, sausages and canned vegetables will automatically have a high salt content. Less obvious foods, such as cheese, bread, breakfast cereals and baked goods will also boost your salt intake.

If you are interested in healthy eating you may wish to cut down the amount of salt in your diet, or there may be medical reasons for doing so. However, do not embark on a diet which severely restricts your salt consumption without taking medical advice first. Guidelines for cutting down are given on page 1273; follow them to gradually bring down your salt consumption.

Wine-Braised Chicken

PAUL WEBSTER

Planning a low salt diet

- Do not salt food before microwaving. Use herbs and spices to enhance the flavour of the food, if necessary. Never season food at the table before tasting it.
- Keep the salt cellar off the table and restrict the use of table sauces, ketchups, salad dressings and mustards, all of which contain salt.
- Read the labels on processed and manufactured food. Look for the word sodium as well as salt. Remember that ingredients are listed in order of weight, so choose products where salt (or sodium) appears low down on the list. Choose 'no added salt' brands of canned food; alternatively, rinse the drained food to remove some of the brine.
- Do not add salt to baby food, it encourages a taste for salt and too much is harmful as a baby's digestive system cannot cope with an excess.
- Use unsalted or slightly salted butter and margarines; substitute vegetable oil for cooking: 30ml / 2tbls oil equals 25g / 1oz solid fat.
- Cut down on processed foods and make more use of fresh foods which are so quick to cook in the microwave. Make your own cakes, scones and pastry using salt-free baking powder and don't sift extra salt with the flour. Remember naturally salt-free foods, such as fresh fruit, vegetables, meat and fish (except shellfish); fresh fruit juice, milk and yoghurt.

How the microwave can help

Microwave cookery lends itself to a low-salt diet in several ways. Firstly, microwaved food should never be seasoned with salt before it is cooked — added salt will draw the moisture out of the food and dry and toughen it. Secondly, the nature of microwaving is to heighten the flavour of food naturally, so there shouldn't be any need for you to season food at the table. If added flavour is needed, use fresh herbs and spices and leave the salt cellar in the cupboard! As well as flavour, microwaving retains the colour of food so there is no need to resort to old-fashioned methods such as adding a pinch of bicarbonate to 'greens' to help their colour. Finally, as microwaving is so speedy, there will be less need to reach for salty snacks.

Salt substitutes

Adding salt can be more habit than need, in which case making a conscious effort to cut down may be all that is needed. If, however, you genuinely miss the flavouring of salt, there are low-sodium salt substitutes on the market that can fill the gap, but these are relatively expensive and may also contain a proportion of salt. Take care that by adding more for flavour you are not defeating the object of the exercise — at twice the expense. Cutting down gradually, and naturally, may ultimately be best.

Wine-braised chicken

14 mins

Standing time: none

15ml / 1tbls plain flour
150ml / ¼pt water
150ml / ¼pt dry white wine
225g / 8oz carrots, grated
15ml / 1tbls chopped fresh parsley or 5ml / 1tsp dried
1 bouquet garni
pepper
4 boneless chicken breasts, skinned
1 onion, thinly sliced and separated into rings
225g / 8oz button mushrooms, sliced

SERVES 4

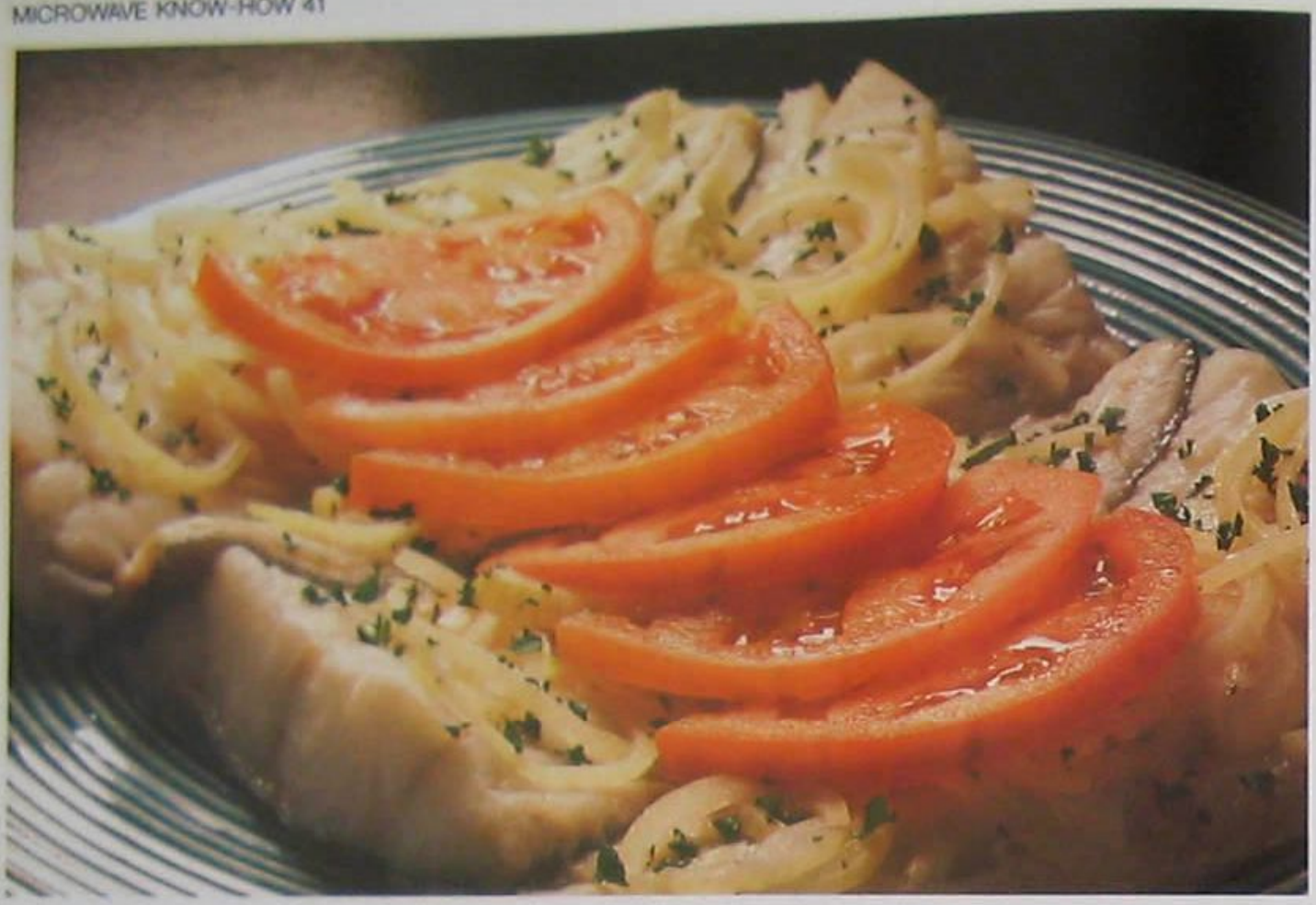
1 Whisk the flour and water together until smooth. Stir in the wine then the carrots, parsley, bouquet garni and pepper to taste.
2 Lay the chicken breasts in a large baking dish. Spoon the wine and carrot mixture over the top and add the onion rings.
3 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 14-17 minutes. Turn the chicken breasts over halfway through and add the mushrooms 5 minutes before the end. The chicken is cooked when it is no longer pink. Remove the bouquet garni before serving.

Wine-braised chicken for two: halve all the ingredients (except the bouquet garni) and use a smaller baking dish. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-14 minutes or until no longer pink. Turn the chicken over halfway through, and add the mushrooms 3 minutes before the end of cooking.

Cook's notes

If you cannot obtain salt-free brands of canned vegetables, drain ordinary canned vegetables then rinse thoroughly under running water. Rinse and drain several times before using.

The World Health Organization recommends a maximum of 5ml / 1tsp salt daily. This is taken from all sources, both in the food and added. In a western diet, where canned vegetables, baked goods, processed cheese, breakfast cereals and canned and bottled sauces and relishes are all high in salt, this will probably entail using low-sodium or sodium-free foods.



Spinach and sprout sauté

5 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

225g / 8oz fresh spinach, trimmed and coarsely chopped
275g / 10oz fresh beansprouts soaked in cold water for 10 minutes and drained
45ml / 3tbls chopped pecans or walnuts
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
5ml / 1tsp finely grated orange zest
pinch of grated nutmeg

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the ingredients in a casserole and toss together.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until the spinach is tender. Stir once.
3 Stand, covered, for 3 minutes.

VARIATION
For a Chinese flavour, use Chinese cabbage instead of the spinach and add 5ml / 1tsp soy sauce instead of the orange zest.

Tomato-topped cod

12 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

4 cod fillets (total weight about 550g / 1¼lb)
60ml / 4tbls dry white wine
25g / 1oz unsalted butter
1 onion, finely sliced
5ml / 1tsp chopped parsley
2 tomatoes, sliced

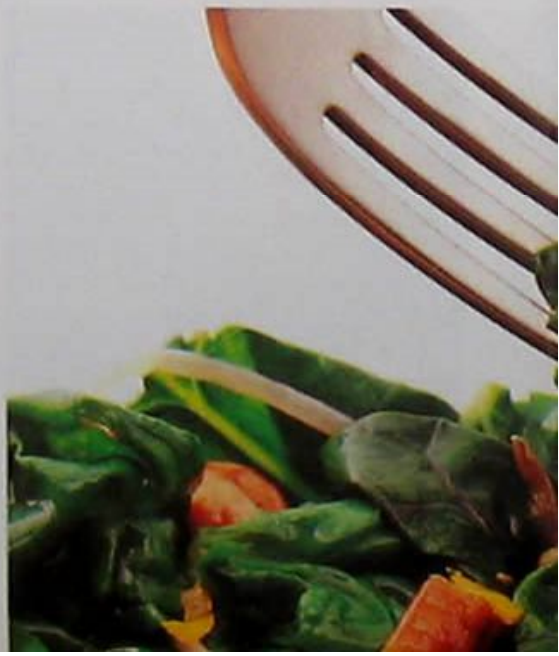
SERVES 4

1 Arrange the fillets across a dish, shielding the thinner tail ends with the thicker end of the fillet. Sprinkle with the wine.
2 Dot with the unsalted butter and cover with the sliced onion. Sprinkle with the parsley.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, or until the fish is just beginning to flake when tested with a fork.
4 Arrange the tomato slices, overlapping, down the centre of the fish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 4 minutes. Stand for 3 minutes.

Slimmer's notes

Tomato-topped Cod uses salt-free fresh ingredients to their best advantage, adding fresh herbs for extra flavour.

Reduce the butter to 15g / ½oz and, as well as being low in salt, you will find this tasty and nutritious dish is low in calories. — only Cal 155 / kJ 650 per portion.



German-style potatoes

19¼ mins

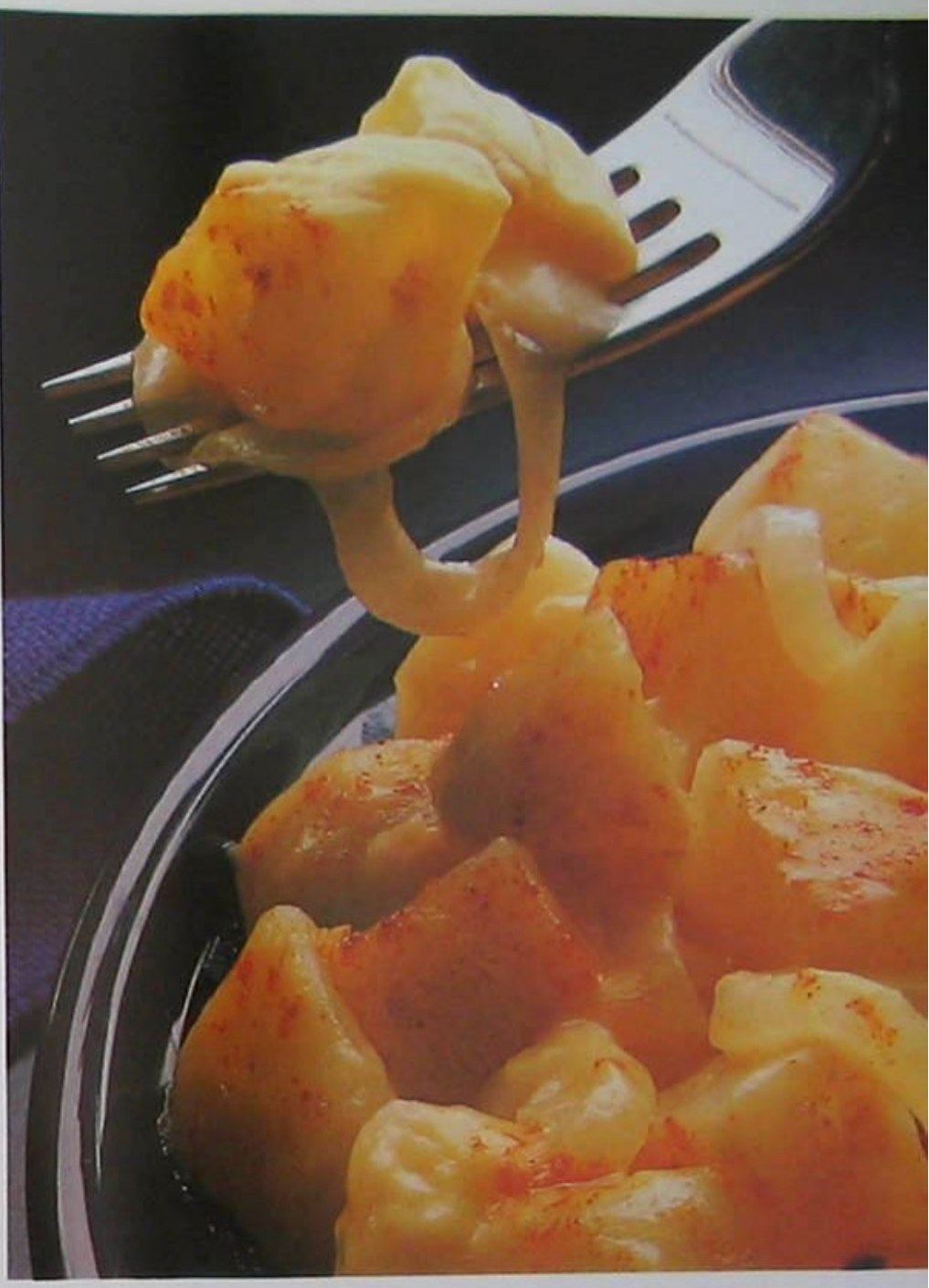
Standing time: none

This unusually flavoured and warming dish is an ideal accompaniment to simply microwaved meat or fish.

800g / 1¾lb potatoes, cut in 2cm / ¾in cubes
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
white pepper
250ml / 9fl oz milk
125ml / 4fl oz beer
paprika

SERVES 4-5

1 Place the potato, onion and garlic in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, or until the potato is tender. Stir every 4 minutes.
2 Melt the butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in flour and pepper then blend in milk and beer.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until thickened, whisking every minute.
4 Pour the sauce over the cooked potato mixture and mix well. Sprinkle with paprika and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until hot.



Left: *Tomato-Topped Cod*
Right: *German-Style Potatoes*
Below: *Spinach and Sprout Sauté*

Cook's notes

Remember that all these ingredients in their raw state are naturally low in salt:

- *Fresh fruit*
- *Fresh vegetables*
- *Fresh meat and poultry*
- *Fresh fish (except shellfish)*
- *Unsalted butter and margarine*
- *Vegetable oil*
- *Fresh fruit juice*
- *Milk and yoghurt*
- *Salad vegetables*

RAY DUNS

Pesto-style pasta

19 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

The traditional pesto sauce from Genoa contains cheese, but it is equally good without.

225g / 8oz wholemeal spaghetti
1.1L / 2pt boiling water

SAUCE
75g / 3oz walnuts or pine nuts
50g / 2oz fresh basil leaves*
1 garlic clove
75ml / 5tbls olive oil

TOPPING
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
1 onion, sliced
2 tomatoes, skinned and chopped
1 courgette, chopped

SERVES 4-6

1 Place pasta and boiling water in a large casserole. Cover; cook at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Stir, then reduce to 50% (Medium) and continue to microwave for 8 minutes, or until the pasta is tender but still firm. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.
3 Meanwhile, make the sauce: purée the walnuts, basil, garlic and oil in a food processor or blender until smooth.
4 Put the oil and onion for the topping in a small casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes and courgettes and microwave for another 3 minutes.
5 Stir 60ml / 4tbls of the pasta water into the sauce. Drain the pasta, add the sauce and toss thoroughly. Sprinkle over topping.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use 3½ cups of basil leaves.

Cook's notes

If fresh basil is not available use parsley instead, removing any tough stalks before weighing.

Do not attempt to make this sauce with dried basil — it is not successful.

Plums and greengages

Microwave plump and rosy plums or fragrant greengages to enjoy them at their best — perfectly delicious in tarts, crunchy crumbles or compotes, or smooth and sweet in jams, purées or syrups.

Plums come in a variety of types and sizes. Ask your greengrocer to recommend the most suitable for cooking, or eating raw, then experiment to decide which flavours and textures you prefer. As a rough guide, sweet, juicy plums are best for eating raw, and the sharper, less juicy varieties are better used for cooking and preserving. Some dual-purpose varieties, which are sold under-ripe for cooking, become sweeter as they ripen.

Greengages, which are a type of plum, are best slightly under-ripe and hard for cooking, but they should be fragrant with flesh that yields to soft pressure if serving them raw.

Never overcook plums, or cook them in too much liquid as their distinctive flavour is easily lost. Cooking them in the microwave in the minimum of liquid, or in sugar syrup, is the surest way of keeping them whole and succulent. Both plums and greengages can be microwaved without liquid or sugar to serve whole, or puréed and sweetened to taste.

Greengage Tart

DON LAST

How to choose and store plums

Choose *sound, undamaged fruit that is beginning to soften slightly, but avoid any that are squashy, or with broken or discoloured, browny skin. Colour is not an accurate guide as it ranges from yellow-green to red and purple-red, according to variety. Avoid very hard fruit, which will not ripen.*

Leave *firm, slightly under-ripe fruit at room temperature for 1-4 days to ripen. Refrigerate ripe fruit in the crisper and use within 1-2 days.*

Greengage tart

16 mins

Standing time: none

Greengages, which turn golden when cooked, make a delightful filling for this French-style fruit tart.

1 quantity Crème Patissière (see Part 34, page 920)
1.5ml / ¼tsp almond flavouring
450g / 1lb greengages, halved and stoned
whipped cream, to serve

PASTRY
150g / 5oz plain flour
50g / 2oz ground almonds
75g / 3oz butter or margarine
1 egg yolk
12.5-15ml / 2½-3tsp cold water
5ml / 1tsp almond flavouring

GLAZE
90ml / 6tbls greengage, or apricot jam
22.5-30ml / 1½-2tbls lemon juice
30ml / 2tbls water

SERVES 5-6

1 Make the pastry: mix together the flour and almonds, then rub in butter until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in the egg yolk, the water and the almond flavouring and mix to a fairly firm dough. Add more water to the mixture if needed.

2 Roll out the pastry and use to line a 23cm / 9in microwave-safe pie plate. Pinch the edge to decorate and prick the base with a fork. Lightly press two sheets of absorbent paper over the base.

3 Stand the pie on an upturned plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, rotating the dish half a turn once. Remove the paper and microwave for 2½-3 minutes until the pastry is dry, rotating the dish a half turn once. Leave until cold.

4 Make the Crème Patissière, following the instructions given in Part 34, page 920, but using 1.5ml / ¼tsp almond flavouring instead of vanilla flavouring.

5 Arrange the greengages, cut side down, in one layer in a round, shallow dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, rotating a quarter turn twice. Rearrange the fruit, cover and microwave for 30-60 seconds, until greengages are softened, but still whole.

6 Spread the cold Crème Patissière in the base of the pastry case and arrange the greengages, cut side down, on top.

7 Prepare the glaze: put the jam, lemon juice and water in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3½ minutes stirring twice, until syrupy. Spoon over the greengages and leave until cold. Decorate with piped whirls of whipped cream and serve with extra cream in a bowl, if liked.

RAY DUNS

Plum crumble

5 mins

Standing time: 4 mins

This melt-in-the-mouth crumble has as much fruit as topping.

450g / 1lb plums, halved and stoned
50g / 2oz sugar

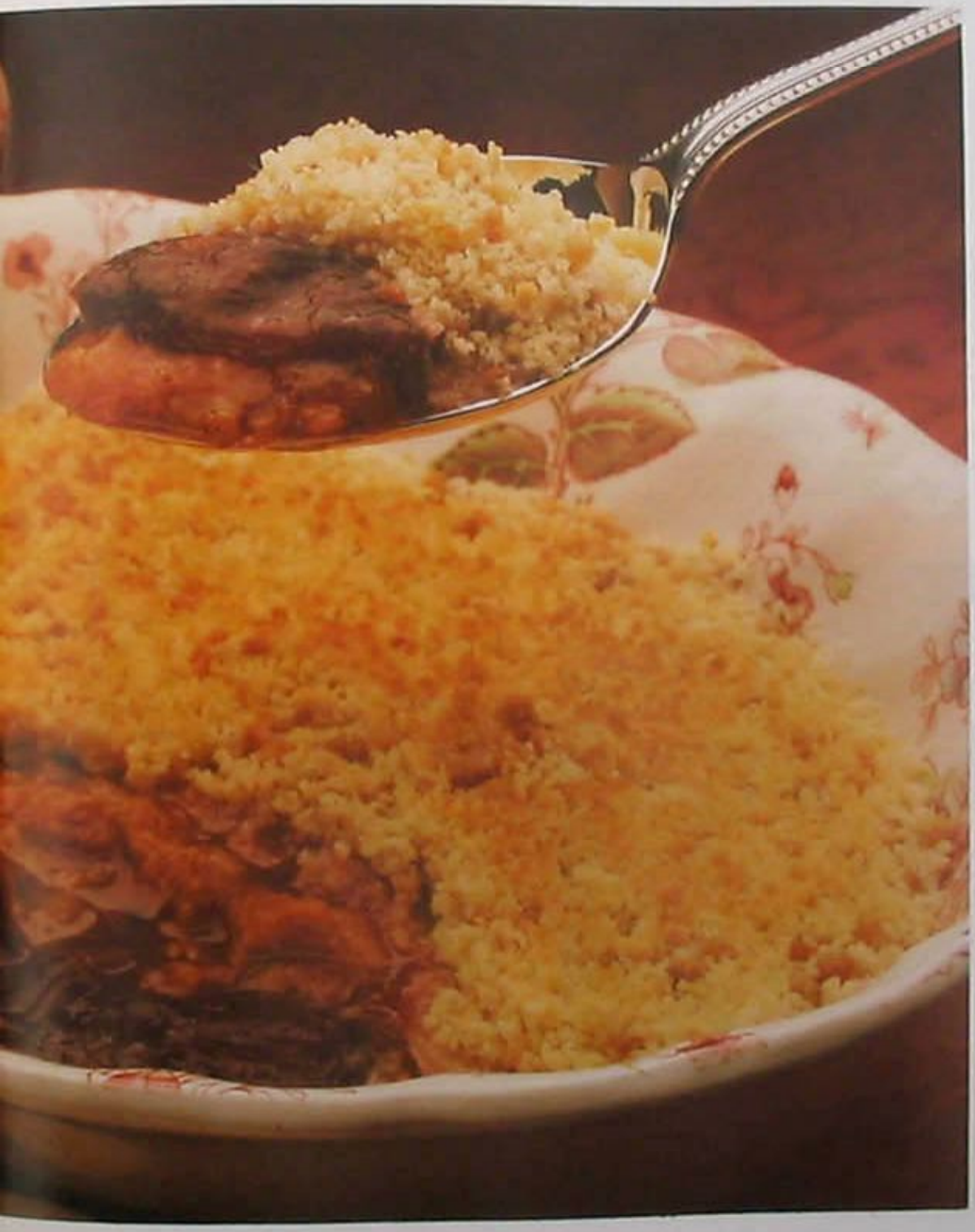
CRUMBLE
150g / 5oz plain flour
65g / 2½oz caster sugar
65g / 2½oz butter or margarine
sifted icing sugar, to decorate

SERVES 4

1 Lightly grease a 1.7L / 3pt dish. Add the plums and sprinkle them with the sugar.
2 In a bowl, combine the flour and caster sugar for the crumble and rub in butter until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Sprinkle evenly over the plums.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, turning three times.
4 Stand 4 minutes, then dredge with icing sugar and serve hot.

VARIATION
For a subtle flavour, add the grated zest of half an orange or 2.5ml / ½tsp powdered cloves, cinnamon or ginger to the plums.

Plum Crumble



How to microwave poached plums

Place *45ml / 3tbls hot water and 100g / 4oz caster sugar in a shallow dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once, until sugar is dissolved and bubbling.*

To flavour, *stir 30ml / 2tbls rum or amaretto into the hot syrup. For a citrus flavour, substitute orange juice for the water and add some finely cut strips of orange rind.*

Add *450g / 1lb ripe plums, halved and stoned, turning to coat; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, rotating and rearranging twice. Stand 2-3 minutes.*

Greengage mousse

6¾ mins

Standing time: none

Serve this delicious, velvety textured mousse with crisp wafer biscuits or sponge fingers.

450g / 1lb greengages, halved, stoned and chopped
30ml / 2tbls water
50g / 2oz caster sugar
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
17.5ml / 3½tsp powdered gelatine
30ml / 2tbls hot water
150ml / ¼pt double cream
1 egg white
few drops of green food colouring, (optional)
whipped cream, to decorate

SERVES 6

1 Put the greengages in a bowl with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes, stirring once, until very soft.
2 Transfer to a blender and process to a purée. Reserve 75ml / 5tbls of the purée. Stir the sugar and lemon juice into remainder.
3 Sprinkle the gelatine over the hot water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds (do not let the water boil), then whisk briskly to dissolve.
4 Cool slightly, then stir into the greengage mixture. Chill until beginning to thicken, but before it starts to set at the edges.
5 Whip the cream until softly peaking. Whisk egg white until it forms stiff peaks. Fold both quickly but lightly into greengage mixture using a metal spoon, until well blended. Add a few drops of green colouring, if using, then spoon into a serving bowl, or individual dishes. Chill for several hours until set.
6 Spread the reserved greengage purée over the mousse and decorate with rosettes of whipped cream. Serve lightly chilled.

RAY DUNN

Top: *Red Plum Jam*
Below: *Sugared Plums*

Sugared plums

3 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

Use these flavoursome plums to garnish meat, poultry or offal.

100g / 4oz caster sugar
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
450g / 1lb large ripe plums, halved and stoned

SERVES 4

1 Mix together the sugar and cinnamon. Melt the butter or margarine in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds.
2 Dip the cut side of the plums in the butter then roll them in the sugar mixture and arrange cut side up in a shallow, round dish.
3 Cover loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes until just tender. Turn the dish after 1 minute and rearrange the plums after 2 minutes.
4 Sprinkle any remaining sugar over the plums. Stand for 2 minutes, then serve immediately with plain yoghurt, if liked.

VARIATION

Plum flan: make as above then drain and reserve the juices and arrange the plums in a flan case. Whisk 15ml / 1tbls arrowroot into the juices, then microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, whisking twice until thickened. Cool 5 minutes; spoon over the plums.

Red plum jam

35 mins

Standing time: 10-15 mins

Use under-ripe fruit for this jam to get a good set. A combination of several types of plums gives the jam a lovely colour and flavour.

900g / 2lb red plums, halved and stoned, stones reserved
75ml / 3fl oz water
900g / 2lb granulated or preserving sugar
knob of butter or margarine

MAKES ABOUT 1.5kg / 3lb

1 Tie the stones in a small piece of muslin. Place in a 2.8L / 5pt container with the plums and water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 13-15 minutes, stirring three times, until the plums are very soft. Discard stones and set the plums aside.
2 Put the sugar in a large bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, until warm.
3 Stir warmed sugar into the plums with the butter. If the sugar does not dissolve completely, microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Stir until dissolved.
4 Microwave the plums and sugar, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 18-20 minutes, turning the container every 5 minutes, until setting point is reached (see stage 5). Stand for 10-15 minutes.
5 To test for a set, drop 5ml / 1tsp jam on to a chilled saucer and allow to cool. Push lightly with a finger; the surface should wrinkle if ready to set. If not, microwave at 100% (High) for a further 1 minute and test again.
6 Leave to cool for 10-15 minutes before pouring into warmed jars. Place waxed paper discs (wax side down) over the jam surface. Leave until cold, then cover and label.

Microtips

Always use a large bowl or container for jam-making so there is plenty of room for the jam to boil without spilling over.

Cook's notes

Cooking the stones with the plums improves the flavour of the jam and, because of their high pectin content, the stones also gives a good setting quality to jam.

Adding a knob of butter helps to break down and disperse any froth that forms as the jam boils and prevents a scum forming. This avoids waste as you will not have to skim the jam surface before potting.

Fresh plum syrup

13 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb ripe red or purple plums, halved, stoned and chopped
150ml / ¼pt water
225g / 8oz sugar
105ml / 7tbls golden syrup

MAKES 575ml / 1pt

1 Put the plums into a large bowl with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes until very soft, mashing twice.
2 Line a strainer with a double thickness of muslin and place over a bowl. Add the plums and press to extract all juice; there should be about 275ml / ½pt.
3 Microwave the juice at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until hot. Microwave the sugar for 1-2 minutes until warm, then stir into the juice with the golden syrup. If the sugar does not completely dissolve, return the syrup to the microwave and cook for 1 minute. Stir thoroughly.
4 Continue to microwave for 4-5 minutes, or until boiling. Boil for 1 minute. Allow to cool slightly.
5 Pour into a warmed jar. Cover and refrigerate for up 1 week. Serve over waffles or ice cream.

VARIATION
Plum jelly: reduce the golden syrup to 75ml / 5tbls. The boiled mixture will then set to a jelly for spreading on scones and toast.

Fresh Plum Syrup

Cheese and wine party

Cheese and wine parties can be as simple or elaborate as you like. With a microwave the preparation remains simple, but you can make decorative and unusual dishes to accompany your choice of wines.

The essence of a good cheese and wine party is a balanced combination of complementary food and drink served at its very best.

A microwave takes the effort out of the necessary food preparation, leaving you free to take care of the cheeses and wines.

Even when catering for only a small number of people, it is advisable to offer a good choice of wines, both red and white and, if liked, rosé. As a general rule, allow at least three good glasses of wine per person. Although wine and cheese generally go well together, avoid the sweeter wines, particularly the whites such as Riesling, Sauternes, Champagne or Ausleses. As red wines tend to be

drier, take your pick, according to your taste (see Wine notes, below).

This menu offers an exciting selection of tempting microwave nibbles that are cooked with ease — the perfect accompaniments to a glass or two of wine.

Cheeses

Strong or mild, soft, semi-soft, or hard, plain or blue-veined, the choice is endless. Apart from your favourites, select a couple of new ones to sample with your guests. There is no hard and fast rule, other than to buy only cheeses which have been carefully stored and which 'look' right.

When choosing cheese, avoid any packages which are dented, opened or which show loose moisture in the packing. Cheeses cut off the block should never look cracked, dry or shrivelled. If storing cheeses in the refrigerator, keep well wrapped in foil or cling film in the least cold part, and allow at least two hours for cheeses to reach room temperature.

Arrange your selection of cheeses attractively on a large board or platter, garnished with small bunches of black and green grapes and leafy sticks of celery. To avoid the blue or 'smelly' cheeses tainting the plain varieties, provide a separate cheese knife.

Serve cheeses with accompaniments such as olives, crisp biscuits, plain or semi-sweet, breadsticks, pretzels or crusty French bread.

While white wines need to be served at a cool 7°C / 45°F, reds are at their best if brought to room temperature (15°C / 60°F) before serving. Open red wines and let them breathe for at least an hour before serving. To chambré red wines use your microwave.

Use a corkscrew with a strong thread, not just a spiral around a central spike, and ensure that all glasses are dust-free.

MENU
Spinach-filled Loaf
Warm crusty bread with a creamed spinach dip
Port Wine Cheese Balls
Blended cheeses in shaped 'apples'
Olive Nuggets
Piquant stuffed olives in a baked coating
Hot Crusty Bread Rolls
Serve hot, to order from the microwave
Savoury Cocktail Snacks
Nuts, crisps and cheese biscuits
Selected Red and White Wines
A choice of wines to complement cheese
SERVES 8

Countdown

In the morning

Microwave the cheese ball mixture and chill. Microwave the filling for the Spinach-filled Loaf and store in a cool place. Hollow out the bread and store wrapped in cling film. Shape the cheese ball mixture into four balls, coat and decorate. Cover and refrigerate. Assemble the Olive Nuggets and arrange in the dish for microwaving.

During the afternoon

Put white wines to chill in the refrigerator. Polish up wine glasses; set out plates and cutlery and lay the table.

Two hours before the party

Open the red wines and leave to breathe. Remove cheeses from the refrigerator, unwrap and set out with snacks and biscuits. Cover loosely with a fresh cloth. Microwave very hard cheese according to the Microtips, page 1285.

As guests arrive

Fill the loaf. Microwave the Olive Nuggets and serve hot, arranging all the food on the table together. Wrap the bread rolls in absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High), allowing 8-12 seconds for each roll.

Wine notes

WHITE WINES

France
Chablis – dry, crisp, slightly smoky
Burgundy – light, dry, fresh
Muscadet – crisp, quite fruity
Bordeaux – light and dry

Italy
Orvieto – light, medium to dry
Soave – light, quite dry
Frascati – crisp, light and dry

Spain
Rioja – dry, full-flavoured, slightly woody

RED WINES

France
Claret – light, dry, delicate
Beaujolais – tart, young and light
Burgundy – soft, fruity, full-bodied

Italy
Chianti – rich flavoured, full bodied
Valpolicella – hearty, robust

Spain
Rioja – rich, dry, woody

To chambré red wine by microwave, pour it into a heatproof jug or carafe without metal trim, and microwave at 100% (High), allowing 40-50 seconds per bottle or 60 seconds per litre. Stand for 5 minutes.

Spinach-filled loaf

12¼ mins

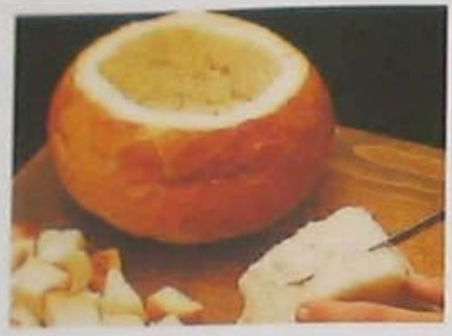
Standing time: none

1 round crusty loaf, weighing about 450g / 1lb
2 × 225g / 8oz packets frozen chopped spinach
450g / 1lb cream cheese
45ml / 3tbls milk
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
salt and pepper
pinch of grated nutmeg
pinch of cayenne pepper
tomato rosettes
parsley sprigs

SERVES 8

How to microwave Spinach-filled loaf

Cut *a 5cm / 2in slice horizontally across the top of the loaf. Using a sharp knife, cut a circle in the bread dough, about 2.5cm / 1in from the edge of the crust.*



Remove *the dough in the centre in large pieces, leaving about 2.5cm / 1in of bread in the base. Cut the scooped out bread into pieces for dipping and set aside.*

Pierce *the spinach packets and microwave at 100% (High) for 11-12 minutes, or until thawed and heated, rearranging once. Drain the spinach.*

Place *the cream cheese in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Mix spinach and remaining ingredients into the cheese.*

Arrange *a piece of absorbent paper on a plate and place the hollow crust on top. Fill the cavity with the cream cheese and spinach mixture, mounding it slightly in the centre.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, or until warm. Place on a serving dish and arrange the tomato rosettes and parsley around the crust. Serve warm with the bread.*

Olive nuggets

4 mins

Standing time: none

275g / 10oz Basic Rubbed-in Mix (see part 30, page 806)
150ml / ¼pt milk
45ml / 3tbls dry breadcrumbs
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan cheese
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder
40 stuffed olives, drained
40g / 1½oz butter or margarine

MAKES 40

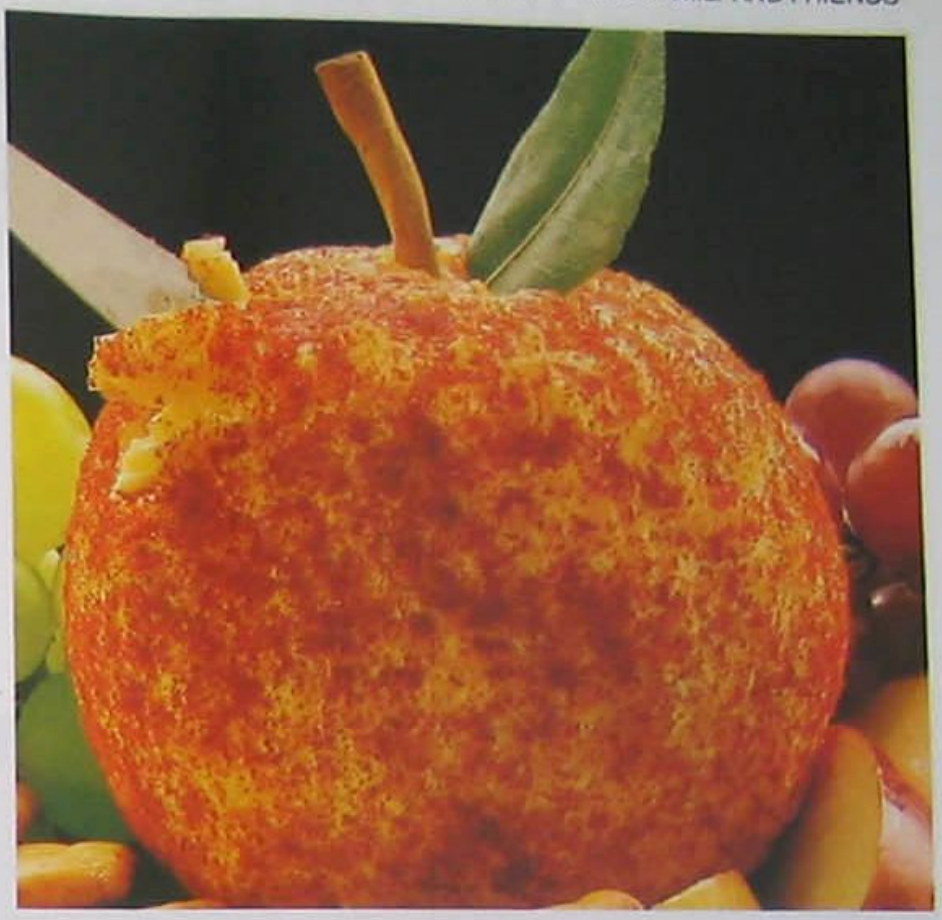
1 Combine the rubbed-in mix and milk, gradually working together to make a smooth dough. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough out to a rectangle 20 × 12.5cm / 8 × 5in. Cut into forty 2.5cm / 1in squares.
2 Mix breadcrumbs, Parmesan and chilli powder in a bowl.
3 Wrap each olive in a square of dough, pinching the ends to seal.
4 Microwave the butter, covered

RAY DUNS

at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds.
5 Coat each wrapped olive in butter, then in the crumb mixture. Place in a lightly greased 23cm / 9in pie plate with a buttered glass, open end up, in the centre.
6 Microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-5 minutes, or until the dough coating springs back when lightly pressed. Turn once. Serve hot.

Cook's notes

Shape and seal the olives in the dough for Olive Nuggets, pinching the edges together firmly.



Port wine cheese balls

1 min

Standing time: none

350g / 12oz cream cheese
450g / 1lb strong Cheddar cheese, grated
45ml / 3tbls port or sherry
paprika, to coat
4 cinnamon sticks
4 bay leaves

MAKES 4 BALLS

1 Place the cream cheese in a bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1-1½ minutes, stirring once, until softened.
2 Mix in the Cheddar and port and blend together well, using a fork or a wooden spoon, until evenly mixed. Chill for 1-2 hours.
3 Divide the mixture into four even quarters and shape each piece into a ball. The easiest way is to wrap in cling film and shape the cheese mixture through the wrapping. Sprinkle paprika over a large plate and roll the shaped balls in it to coat all over, shaking off any excess.

Above: *Port Wine Cheese Ball*
Left: *Olive Nuggets*

4 Use a cinnamon stick as a stem and add the bay leaves to make the cheese balls look like rosy apples. Serve with crisp biscuits and fruit. Keep the cheese balls refrigerated, wrapped in foil or cling film for up to 2 weeks. Do not freeze.

VARIATION
If you prefer a stronger taste for the cheese ball, use 450g / 1lb blue cheese or Stilton. Choose a fairly firm cheese which is not too ripe and can be grated. Mix with the softened cream cheese and coat and garnish as before. Keep well chilled once shaped.

Microtips

Firm cheese such as Cheddar or Cheshire, can be 'ripened' by microwave. Place 225g / 8oz cheese on a dish or board and microwave at 30% (Low) for 30-45 seconds, giving the dish a quarter turn once. Stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Meatless main meals

You don't have to be a vegetarian to enjoy these tasty main course dishes — all made in less than 30 minutes. Microwaving makes the most of the goodness, colour and texture of the vegetables used.

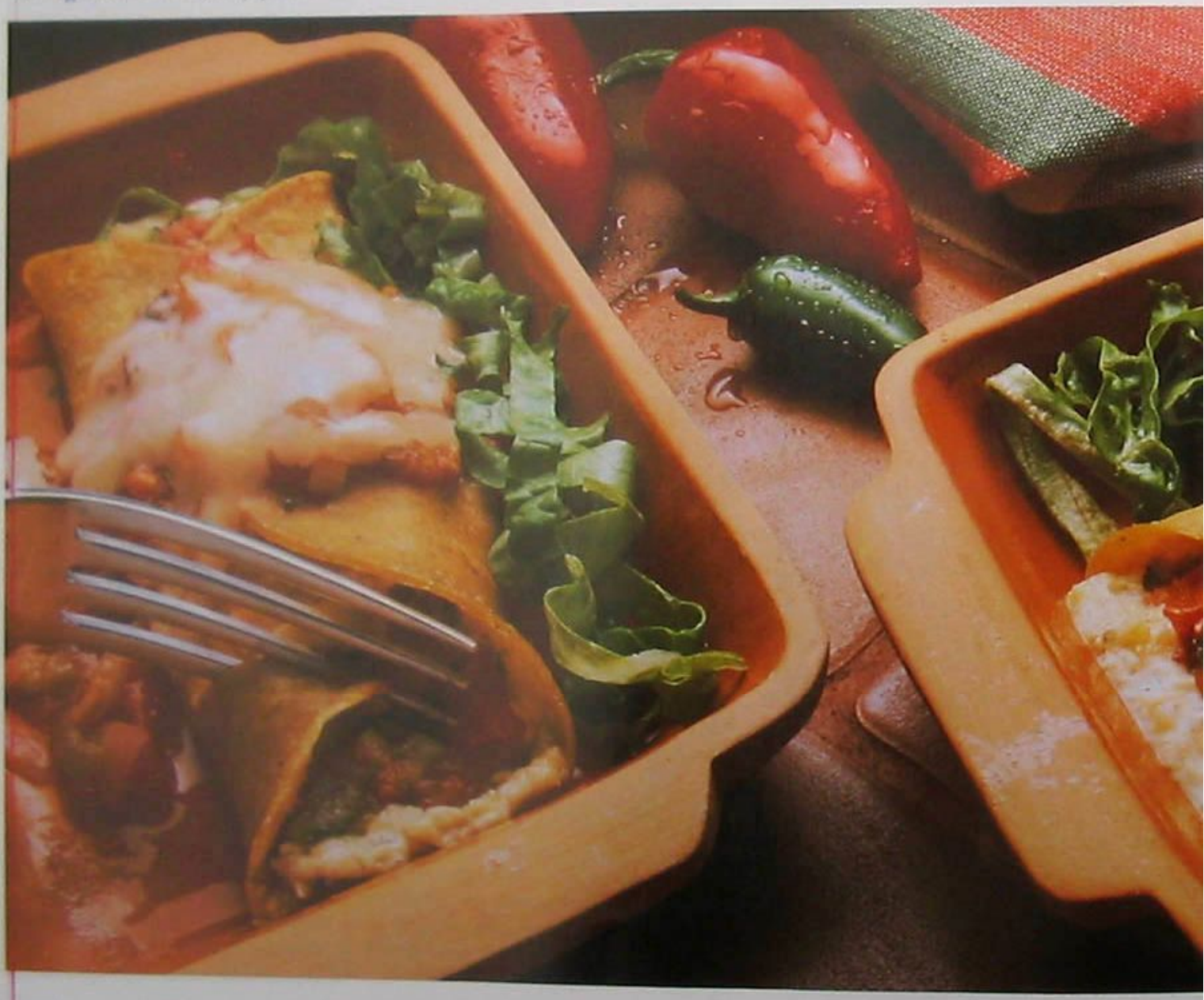
More and more people are reducing the amount of meat they eat — or cutting meat out of their diet altogether. Catering for a non-meat eater can be quite a challenge for the cook keen to dish up a tasty, attractive main course without spending hours in the kitchen. But a little imagination, plus help from the microwave, can solve the problem.

The recipes here are all based on vegetables, with dairy products or eggs sometimes added for extra protein. Properly cooked, many vegetables are a valuable source of vitamins, minerals and fibre. The high fibre content of sweetcorn and kidney beans make the Mexicali sweetcorn and Kidney bean casserole particularly satisfying and filling.

Microwaving is by far the best way to cook vegetables and is certainly quicker than most conventional methods. Since only a very little water is needed for cooking, vegetables retain their bright colour and crisp texture; they keep their shape well and their goodness too.

The dishes here all take under 25 minutes to cook. Serve with a mixed salad, simply cooked green vegetable or a potato microwaved in its jacket for a quick, yet well balanced and nourishing meal.

Vegetable Enchiladas



Vegetable enchiladas

20½ mins

Standing time: none

Enchiladas are a popular Mexican dish of stuffed tortillas (corn pancakes). Here they are served with a spicy tomato sauce. Crêpes (see Part 39, page 1058) may be used as an alternative to tortillas.

If you arrange the enchiladas seam side up, secure each one with a wooden cocktail stick.

4 × 15cm / 6in corn tortillas or thin crêpes
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
100g / 4oz cottage cheese
pinch of salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp chilli powder
large pinch of ground cumin
1 tomato, chopped
1 courgette, coarsely grated
½ green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
275ml / ½pt Spicy tomato sauce (see recipe)

SERVES 4

Spicy tomato sauce

11 mins

Standing time: none

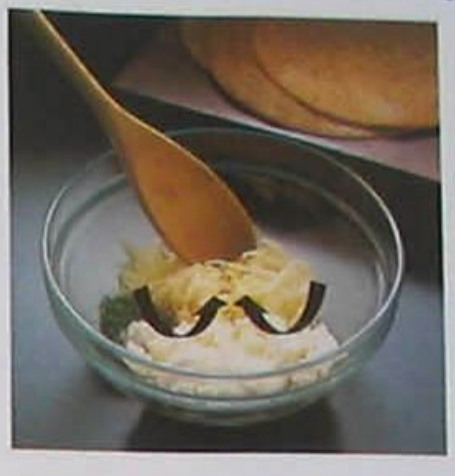
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
227g / 8oz can whole tomatoes
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cumin
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
salt and pepper to taste
1.5ml / ¼tsp chilli powder (optional)

MAKES 700ml / 1¼pt

1 Combine the green pepper, onion and garlic in a bowl. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes until tender.

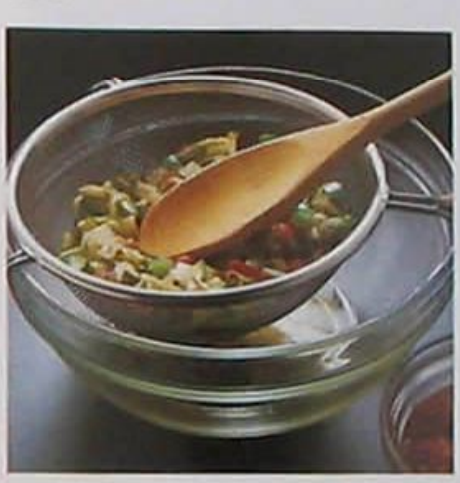
2 Stir in remaining ingredients. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 8-11 minutes or until hot, thick and flavours are blended.

How to microwave Vegetable enchiladas



Combine *half the Cheddar cheese in a small bowl with the cottage cheese, salt, chilli and cumin. Stir together and set aside.*

Mix *tomato, courgette, green pepper and onion in a bowl. Cover with cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes until onion is tender.*



Drain *the vegetables and press lightly to remove excess moisture. Mix the drained vegetables with half of the spicy tomato sauce. Set aside.*

Spread *a quarter of the cheese mixture over each tortilla or crêpe; top with a quarter of the vegetable mixture and roll up.*

Arrange *tortillas, seam side down, in a shallow dish. Pour the remaining sauce down the centre and cover with greaseproof paper.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, rotating once. Sprinkle with cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes, uncovered.*

Spinach lasagne

22 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 no-need-to-pre-cook lasagne sheets
5ml / 1tsp vegetable oil
pinch of salt
425ml / ¾pt boiling water
4 tomatoes
1 small onion, finely chopped
60ml / 4tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
250g / 8.8oz packet frozen spinach
100g / 4oz Mozzarella cheese, grated
225g / 8oz cottage cheese
1 clove garlic, crushed
salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 4

1 Layer the lasagne sheets in a shallow 20 × 30cm / 8 × 12in rectangular dish; sprinkle with the oil and salt. Pour over the boiling water to cover. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6 minutes or until tender. Stand for 5 minutes. Drain and pat dry.

Above: *Spinach Lasagne*
Right: *Mexicali Sweetcorn*

2 Cut eight thin slices from the tomatoes and set aside. Chop the remaining tomatoes and combine with the onions and tomato ketchup in a small bowl. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until the onion is tender. Stir once or twice.

3 Remove frozen spinach from packet, place in bowl and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, breaking up with a fork.

4 Drain spinach well. Mix with 50g / 2oz of the Mozzarella, the cottage cheese, garlic, salt and pepper.

5 Cut lasagne sheets in half. Place a half sheet in four 16 × 11cm / 6½ × 4½in individual shallow dishes. Divide half the cooked tomato mixture and half the spinach between the four dishes, spreading a layer of tomatoes and a layer of spinach over each.

6 Cover with another pasta sheet and repeat vegetable layers. Top each dish with two slices of reserved tomato and sprinkle with the remaining Mozzarella cheese.

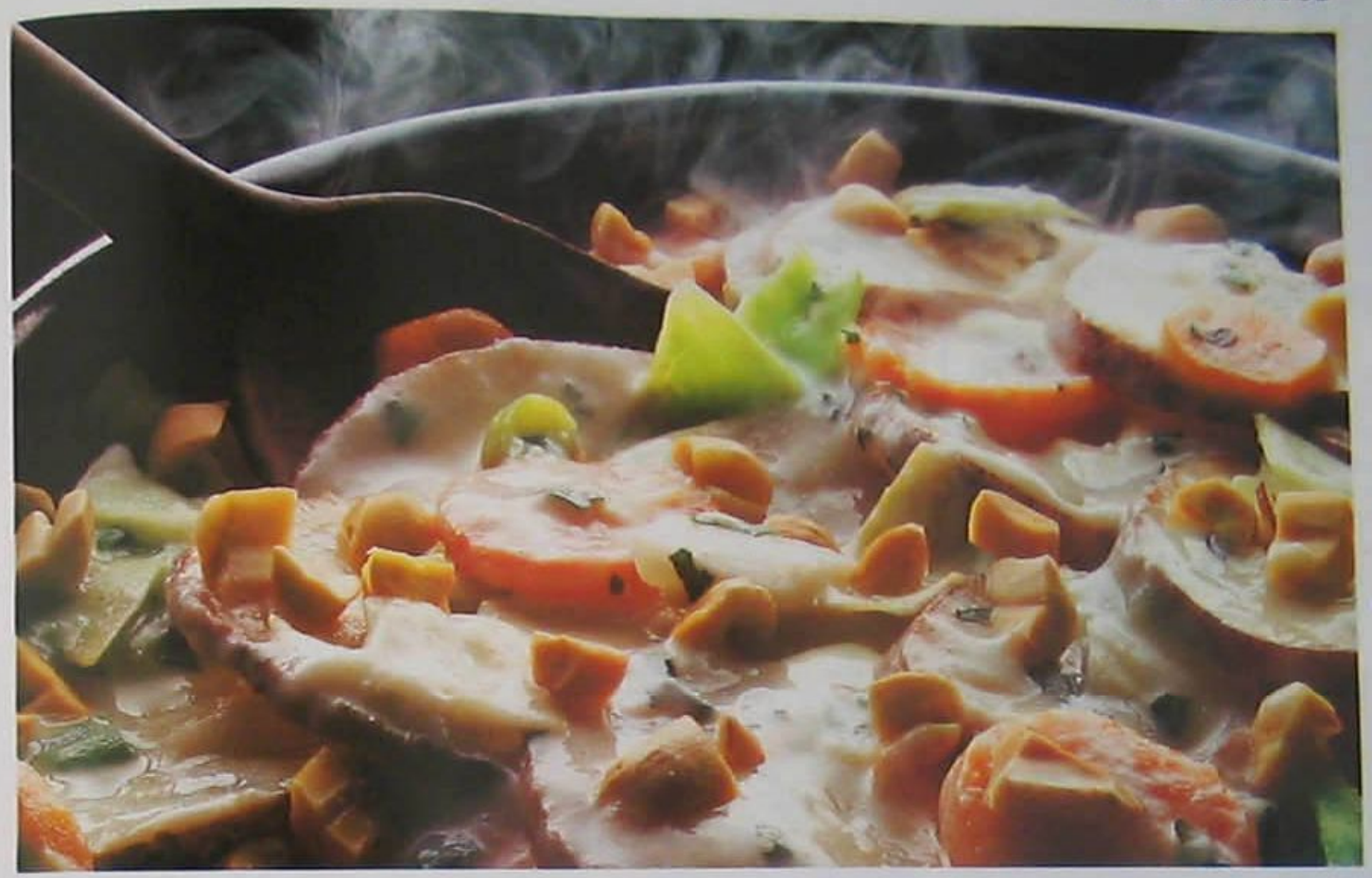
7 Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, or until cheese melts and mixture is hot. Quarter turn after half cooking time. Stand for 5 minutes.

Spinach lasagne for two: use half the ingredients and divide them between two individual dishes. Cook the tomato and onion mixture for 2-3 minutes and the assembled lasagne for 5-6 minutes. Give the dishes a quarter turn halfway through the cooking time. Stand for 2 minutes.

Cook's notes

It is important to pat the pasta dry and to drain the spinach well, otherwise the dish will be watery when you serve it.

If you do not have individual dishes, use an 18 × 23cm / 7 × 9in rectangular dish. Cooking times remain the same.



Mexicali sweetcorn

20½ mins

Standing time: none

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz fresh breadcrumbs
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
298g / 10oz can cream-style corn
198g / 7oz can sweetcorn kernels, drained
150ml / ½pt soured cream
3 eggs, beaten
30ml / 2tbls finely chopped spring onion or green pepper
salt, pepper and paprika

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter in a casserole and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds to melt.
2 Stir in all the remaining ingredients except paprika and mix. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, stirring twice.
3 Pour mixture into a shallow, 23cm / 9in round dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 18-20 minutes, or until set, rotating dish a quarter turn every 3 minutes. Dust with paprika.

Cabbage au gratin

24¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

A small amount of malt vinegar added at the end of the cooking time gives a savoury tang to this flavoursome and nutritious dish.

40g / 1½oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls plain flour
575ml / 1pt milk
3 spring onions, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
salt and pepper to taste
2-3 large waxy potatoes (weighing about 350g / 12oz) cut into 3mm / ⅛in thick slices
175g / 6oz white cabbage, finely shredded
1 small carrot, cut into 3mm / ⅛in slices
5ml / 1tsp malt vinegar
30ml / 2tbls dry roasted peanuts, chopped

SERVES 4

Above: *Cabbage au Gratin*

1 Microwave the butter or margarine at 100% (High) in a large covered bowl or casserole for 45 seconds or until just melted. Blend in the flour. Gradually add 425ml / ¾pt milk to make a smooth sauce. Stir in the chopped spring onions and parsley.
2 Microwave sauce at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until it is thick and smooth, stirring two or three times during cooking. Mix in the grated Cheddar and Parmesan. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
3 Stir the potatoes, cabbage and carrot into the sauce. Cover with vented cling film and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
4 Reduce power to 70% (Medium High); mix remaining milk into the vegetables and cook for a further 15-20 minutes until potatoes are tender. Stir three to four times during cooking, being careful not to break up potatoes.
5 Leave to stand for 5 minutes. Remove cover, stir in vinegar and sprinkle chopped peanuts over the top before serving.

Broccoli mushroom bake

18 mins

Standing time: none

This light-textured, delicately flavoured dish would be good for either lunch or supper. Ideal for slimmers, it has just 80Cal / 335kJ per serving. Serve with a mixed salad sprinkled with lemon juice.

250g / 9oz packet frozen chopped broccoli
60ml / 4tbls water
1 egg, beaten
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt
100g / 4oz cottage cheese
salt and pepper to taste
3 spring onions or 1 small onion, finely chopped
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, chopped

How to microwave Broccoli mushroom bake

Place *frozen broccoli in a casserole with the water and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 9 minutes, or until tender, separate after 3 minutes.*

Drain *broccoli well; set aside. In a small bowl, mix egg with flour, yoghurt and cottage cheese and season. Chop broccoli into even-sized pieces.*

Add *the egg mixture, finely chopped spring onions and chopped mushrooms to the broccoli in the casserole and mix well. Check seasoning.*

Microwave, *uncovered at 50% (Medium) for 9-10 minutes until set. Stir two or three times during first 6 minutes of cooking time.*

Kidney bean casserole

16 mins

Standing time: none

1 small onion, finely chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
15g / ½oz margarine
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
500g / 18fl oz carton creamed tomatoes
2 × 430g / 15oz cans red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
salt and pepper to taste.

SERVES 4

1 Combine the onion, green pepper and margarine in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
2 Add the thyme, garlic and flour to the bowl. Mix in the creamed tomatoes. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring halfway through.
3 Stir kidney beans into the tomato sauce. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes or until the beans are hot and the sauce is thick. Stir once or twice during cooking.
4 Season the bean mixture to taste. Serve with plain boiled rice.

All about shelves

For increased capacity and versatility, choose a microwave with a shelf. Gain all the advantages of producing a complete meal all at once but in half the time of conventional cooking.

A microwave with a shelf is designed to make life even easier. A complete meal will easily fit into these cookers — avoiding complicated calculations about standing and keep-warm times involved when cooking a series of dishes in a normal microwave. Their usefulness is increased, as the shelf can, and indeed should, be removed when not in use. (If the shelf is left in place when food is placed on the base of the cooker only, the power will be reduced and timings altered.)

Extra advantages

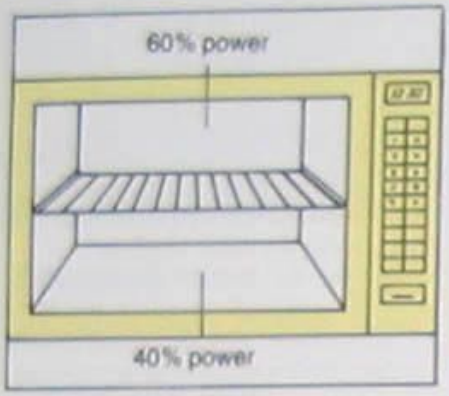
The capacity of this type of cooker can be further extended by adjusting the shelf to give more headroom — either to dishes on the base of the microwave or to those on the shelf itself. The position of the shelf will not affect the power distribution or alter timings.

If you do decide to choose a cooker with a shelf, a further facility which you may find useful is the 10% (Keep-warm) setting. On this setting a whole meal or part of a meal can be kept warm for up to half an hour: after this time the food will begin to dry out.

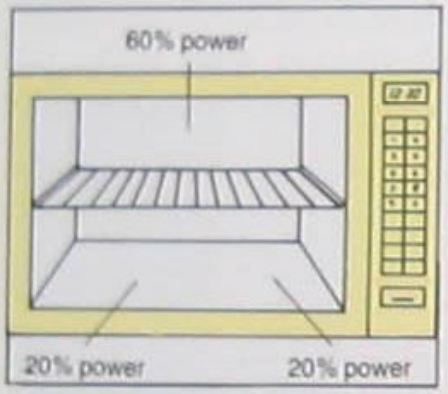
Breakfast Special

PAUL WEBSTER

Power distribution

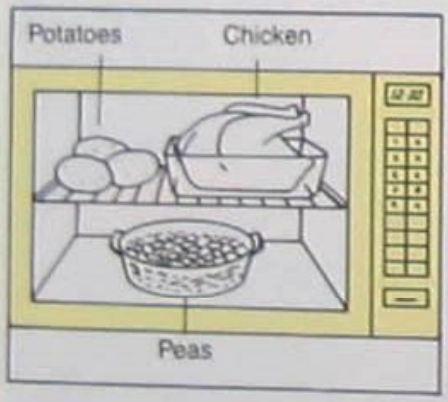


With a shelf in position, the microwave power is divided with 60% going to the shelf and 40% to the floor of cooker.



If more than one dish of food is placed on one level, each receives 50% of the microwave power.

Positioning food



Large, dense food on the shelf shields delicate food underneath, so that the cooking times even out.

Breakfast special

8 mins

Standing time: none

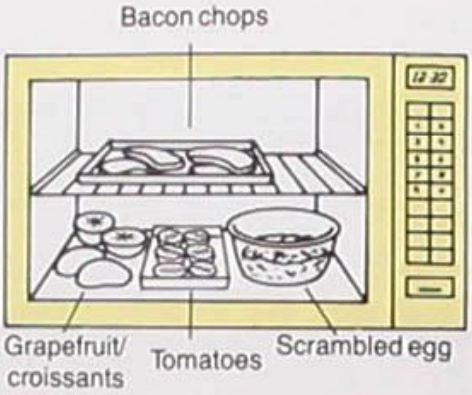
2 grapefruit, halved
20ml / 4tsp caster or soft light brown sugar
4 × 100g / 4oz bacon chops or rashers
4 tomatoes, halved
4 croissants or bread rolls

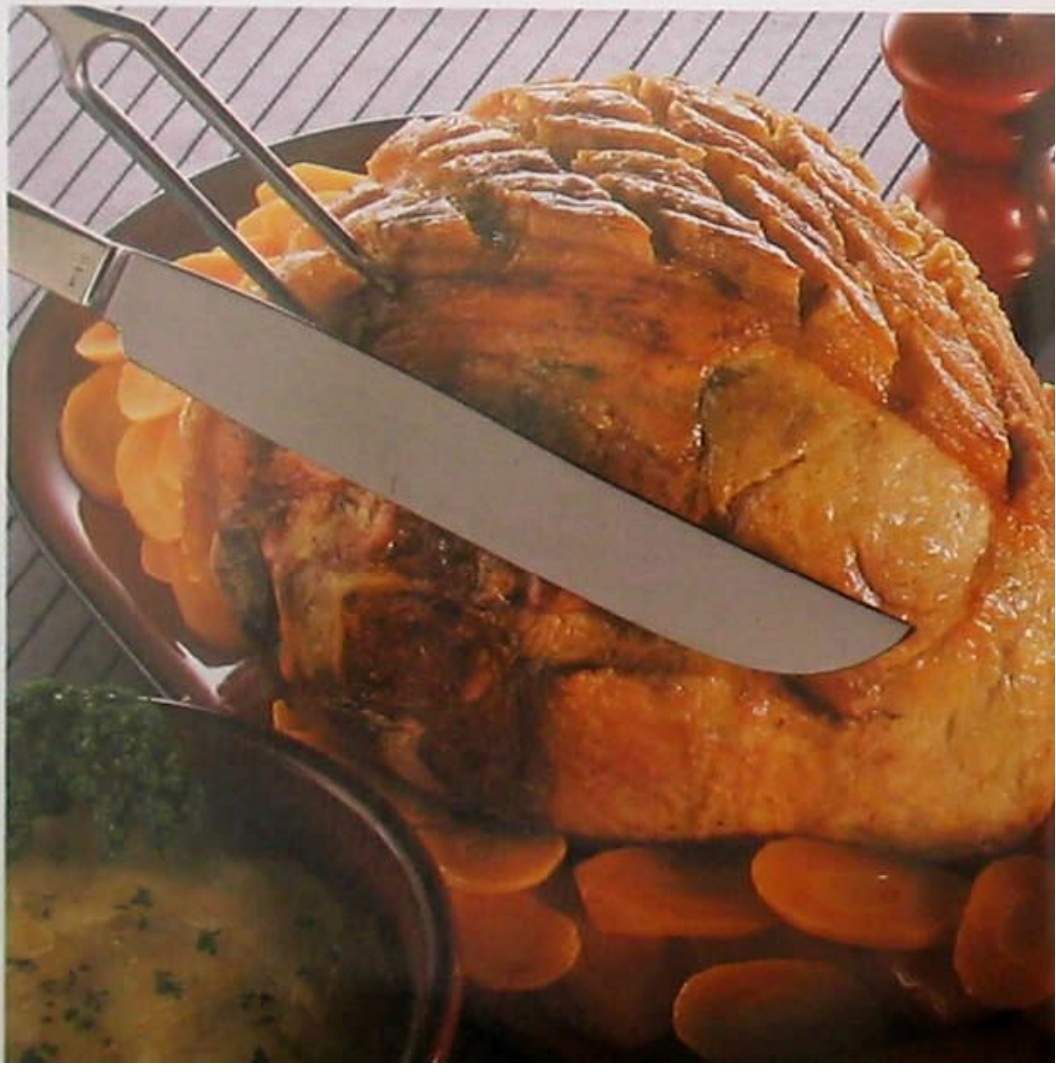
PARSLEY SCRAMBLED EGGS
4 eggs
30ml / 2tbls milk
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4

1 Place the grapefruit halves in bowls and sprinkle with the sugar.
2 Lay the bacon chops on a plate and cover with absorbent paper.
3 Place the tomatoes on a small plate.
4 Beat the eggs in a measuring jug with the milk and seasoning.
5 Microwave the bacon chops on the shelf at 100% (High) for 2 minutes on their own, then arrange the other dishes in the microwave as shown in the diagram below (grapefruit first).
6 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, then remove the grapefruit and add the croissants or rolls wrapped individually in absorbent paper. Fluff the eggs with a fork and add the parsley.
7 Microwave at 100% (High) for another 2 minutes. Check the eggs frequently and, if necessary, cook with tomatoes for another 1-2 minutes to reach the desired consistency.

Arrangement of dishes





Left to right: *Anna Potatoes, Roast Pork and Carrots, Courgette Medley and Orange Moulds*

Roast pork party menu

67 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

A microwave with a shelf makes this dinner party menu extra easy to organize.

1.8kg / 4lb leg of pork
oil and salt for rubbing

COURGETTE MEDLEY
450g / 1lb courgettes, sliced
225g / 8oz tomatoes, skinned and sliced
salt and pepper
60ml / 4tbls chopped parsley
15ml / 1tbls wine vinegar

CARROTS
275g / 10oz carrots, thinly sliced
60-75ml / 4-5tbls hot water

ANNA POTATOES
700g / 1½lb potatoes, sliced
25g / 1oz butter
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley, to garnish

ORANGE MOULDS
50g / 2oz sugar
30ml / 2tbls water
2 eggs
15g / ½oz caster sugar
275ml / ½pt milk
5ml / 1tsp finely grated orange zest

SERVES 4-6

1 Using a sharp knife, slash a diamond pattern in the skin of the pork. Rub a little oil into the skin, then sprinkle with salt. Place, fat side down, on a microwave trivet, in a dish. Place in a vented roasting bag, to aid crisping, if wished.

2 Arrange the courgette and tomato slices for the medley in alternate layers in a round casserole. Season each layer and sprinkle with a little parsley. Finish with a ring of courgette slices around the top of the casserole. Add the wine vinegar and cover.

3 Place the carrots in a baking dish with the hot water and cover.

4 Arrange the potato slices in layers in a casserole. Season each layer and top with a knob of butter. Press down well. Cook uncovered for a crisp finish, or cover if preferred.

5 Prepare the orange moulds: place the sugar and water in a deep bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, until the sugar has dissolved, stirring three times. Microwave for 4-5 minutes, until the syrup turns a rich golden brown. Pour half the caramel into four or six ramekin dishes or tea cups and swirl over the sides and base. Pour any remaining caramel on to an oiled baking sheet and leave to harden.

6 Whisk together the eggs and sugar. Microwave the milk in a jug at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, then gradually whisk into the egg mixture. Strain the custard into a jug and add the orange zest. Pour into the caramel-lined dishes.

7 Arrange the dishes in the microwave as shown in the diagram below.

8 Microwave at 100% (High) for 60-70 minutes. Halfway through cooking, turn the pork over and place the carrots on the bottom of the microwave cooker and the courgettes on the shelf.

9 Remove the pork, tent with foil and leave to stand for 10 minutes. Reduce the power to 30% (Low) and continue to microwave the vegetables until they are fork tender and orange moulds until the custard is set.

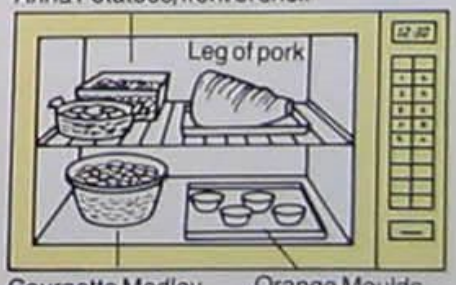
10 Finish the pork under a hot grill to crisp the crackling, if wished.

11 Sprinkle the Anna Potatoes with the chopped parsley, to garnish. Turn the orange moulds out to serve if wished, and decorate with any extra caramel, crushed and sprinkled on top of the moulds.

ANDREW WHITTUCK

Arrangement of dishes

Carrots, back of shelf
Anna Potatoes, front of shelf



Above: *Family Fare*
Right: *Fruit Compote*

Family fare

40 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Sunday lunch is simple: all the food goes in the microwave together and out at the same time.

1.4kg / 3lb chicken
15g / ½oz melted butter mixed with 2.5ml / ½tsp gravy browning
gravy, to serve (see recipe)

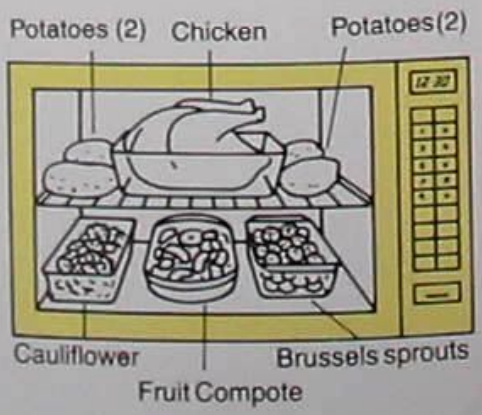
VEGETABLE ACCOMPANIMENTS
4 baking potatoes, scrubbed and pricked
1 small cauliflower, separated into florets
225g / 8oz Brussels sprouts

FRUIT COMPOTE
525g / 1lb 3oz can fruit salad
200g / 7oz can peaches, drained

SERVES 4

1 Place the chicken, breast side up, on a roasting rack and brush with half the browning-butter mixture. Place in a vented roasting bag and seal loosely.
2 Place the cauliflower in a small dish with 50ml / 4tbls hot water and cover. Place the Brussels sprouts in another dish with 60ml / 4tbls hot water and cover.
3 Combine the fruit salad and apricots in a round dish and cover.
4 Arrange the dishes and the prepared baking potatoes in the microwave as shown in the diagram right.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 40-50 minutes. Halfway through cooking, turn the chicken over and brush with remaining browning-butter mixture, then rotate the roasting rack a half turn. Turn and rearrange the potatoes.
6 Test that the chicken is cooked, pierce the meatiest part to the bone: the juices should run clear. When the chicken is cooked, remove it from the bag, cover loosely with foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand for 10 minutes.
7 Continue to microwave the vegetables during this time, until they are tender. Serve the chicken with the vegetables and gravy (see recipe). Return the Fruit compote to the microwave after making the gravy and keep at 10% (Keep warm) until ready to serve.

Arrangement of dishes



Chicken gravy

4 mins

Standing time: none

20ml / 4tsp chicken dripping
30ml / 2tbls flour
575ml / 1pt hot chicken stock
few drops gravy browning
salt and pepper

MAKES ABOUT 575ml / 1pt

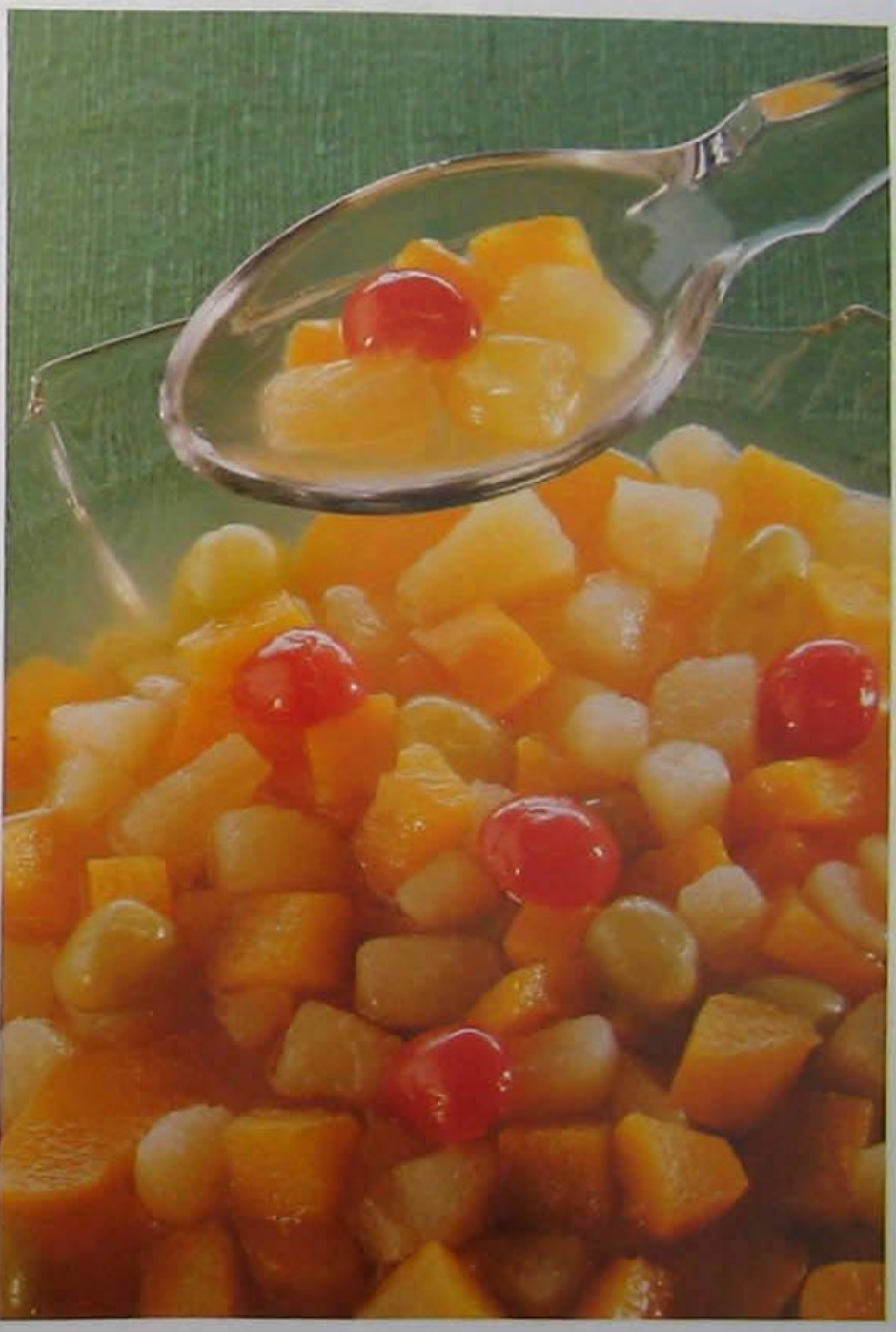
1 Blend the dripping and flour together until smooth. Stir in the chicken stock and a few drops of graving browning.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring every minute. Season to taste and serve.

Microtips

The shelf can be left in when quickly finishing off dishes or making simple sauces or gravy.

Guidelines for shelf cookery

- Never try to add a shelf if the microwave is not designed for it.
- Individual machines may vary, cooking times are a guide only.
- Place food that takes longer to cook on the shelf; more delicate food on the floor of the cooker. If food only needs heating through, place denser foods above each other—otherwise stagger positioning.
- Microwave very dense or frozen foods on their own for the initial few minutes. Add quick-cooking food only for final few minutes.
- To calculate the complete cooking time for a selection of recipes, estimate each individual recipe for the time at 100% (High). Add these up and you will have rough guide to the total time.



ANDREW WHITTUCK

Fruit and vegetable breads

Exploit the natural sweetness of fruits and the savoury flavours of vegetables to make these deliciously moist teabreads really special. Try courgettes, pumpkin or tomatoes as well as carrots.

There's no rule to say that vegetables are exclusively savoury — as these tempting bakes prove. Puréed fruit and vegetables enrich and colour cake and bread mixtures and add a special flavour (certainly not distinguishable as being 'vegetable') and goodness to teabreads and cakes.

As microwaved baked mixtures need to be slightly more liquid than those for conventional baking, microwaving is an ideal way to cook these dishes with their additional moisture content.

Most of the recipes are served sliced like breads, and are cooked in conventionally-shaped loaf dishes. The Tomato and Herb Ring and Chocolate Courgette Cake are, however, treated more as cakes for cooking.

In the same way that large pieces of fruit sink quickly in microwaved bakes, fruit and vegetables need to be puréed or finely grated to give an even texture throughout. Generally, as mixtures are so moist, and cooking is mainly on 50% (Medium) power, there is less need to shield corners, but it is still important to turn the dish for even cooking.

Tomato and Herb Bread

Tomato and herb bread

10 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
30ml / 2tbls fresh breadcrumbs
500g / 18oz plain flour
15ml / 3tsp bicarbonate of soda
4ml / ¾tsp dried basil
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
5ml / 1tsp caster sugar
45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil
215ml / 7½fl oz buttermilk
6 tomatoes, skinned, seeded and puréed (see Cook's notes below)
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
2 eggs, beaten
1 small onion, thinly sliced

SERVES 6-8

1 Lightly grease a 1.7L / 3pt plain ring mould. Line base with greaseproof paper. Mix the parsley with the breadcrumbs and use to coat base and sides of dish.
2 Sift the flour and bicarbonate of soda into a bowl and stir in the basil, oregano and sugar.
3 Mix together the oil, buttermilk, tomato purée and eggs. Stir into the dry ingredients and mix to make a smooth dough. Divide the dough into two on a lightly floured surface and shape each into a roll to fit the ring mould.
4 Place one piece of dough in the ring mould and sprinkle with half the sliced onion. Press the second piece on the top and cover with the remaining onion.
5 Place the mould on an inverted saucer or plate and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-13 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes. The loaf is cooked when slightly springy to touch, and almost dry on top.
6 Leave to stand in the dish for 10 minutes, then turn out and cool on a wire rack.

Cook's notes

Quarter the skinned tomatoes and remove seeds. Put tomato flesh into a blender or food processor until puréed and smooth. Use as required in the recipe.

Orange pumpkin bread

10 mins

Standing time: 5-10 mins

150g / 5oz plain flour
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
2.5ml / ½tsp ground mixed spice
150g / 5oz soft brown sugar
grated zest of 1 large orange
100ml / 3½fl oz vegetable oil
2 eggs, beaten
225g / 8oz canned pumpkin purée, or 275g / 10oz pumpkin, cooked, drained and puréed

SERVES 8-10

VARIATION
Use apple purée for the pumpkin.

Freezer notes

These vegetable and fruit breads freeze well for up to one month. Thaw for several hours at room temperature. If liked, slice the breads before freezing and separate each with cling film — this allows you to remove as few or as many slices as required.

Microtips

Microwaved vegetable and fruit breads keep well for up to 5 days, if wrapped closely in cling film and stored in an airtight tin.

How to microwave Orange pumpkin bread

Grease *a 900g / 2lb loaf dish and line the base with greaseproof paper. Sift the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and mixed spice together and stir in the sugar, mixing evenly.*

Mix *in all the remaining ingredients, beating lightly until evenly blended. Pour the mixture into the dish and shield the corners with small, smooth pieces of foil.*

Place *on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8-9 minutes, giving a quarter turn every 3 minutes. Remove foil. Increase power to 100% (High) for 2-5 minutes.*

Check *the base for uncooked mixture, or press to see if set and springy. Stand for 5-10 minutes in the dish, then turn out on to a wire rack to cool completely. Store closely wrapped.*

Sweet courgette loaf

7 mins

Standing time: 5-10 mins

100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
7.5ml / 1½tsp ground cinnamon
125ml / 4fl oz vegetable oil
2 eggs, beaten
175g / 6oz courgettes, grated
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
30ml / 2tbls golden syrup or black treacle
150g / 5oz sugar
30ml / 2tbls wheatgerm (optional)

SERVES 8-10

1 Lightly grease a 900g / 2lb loaf dish and line the base with grease-proof paper.
2 Place all the loaf ingredients in a large bowl (except the wheatgerm) and beat, using an electric mixer at low speed until blended.
3 If using it, sprinkle the wheatgerm over the base of the lined dish. Spread the loaf mixture evenly in the dish.
4 Place on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 1-2 minutes.
5 Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 1-4 minutes, turning once or twice.
6 Test by checking the base for moisture. If there is no sign of moist patches, the loaf is cooked enough; it should be almost dry on top.
7 Allow to stand in the dish for 5-10 minutes, then turn out and cool on a wire rack. Peel off the paper lining before cooling.

Above: *Sweet Courgette Loaf*
Right: *Spicy Carrot Bread*

Spicy carrot bread

10 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

100g / 4oz dark soft brown sugar
100g / 4oz butter, softened
2 eggs, beaten
100g / 4oz plain flour
7.5ml / 1½tsp baking powder
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
15ml / 1tbls black treacle
237g / 8½ oz can crushed pineapple, well drained
1 carrot, finely grated

SERVES 6

1 Lightly grease a 450g / 1lb loaf dish. Cream sugar and butter, then gradually beat in eggs.
2 Sift the flour, baking powder and ginger and fold into the liquid mixture. Stir in treacle, pineapple and carrot and mix lightly. Spread evenly in the prepared dish.
3 Place on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes. Increase power to 100% (High) and microwave for 4-6 minutes until just springy to the touch, turning twice during cooking.
4 Stand for 10 minutes, then turn out and cool on a wire rack.

Ginger and apple bread

7 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

100g / 4oz plain flour
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
50g / 2oz margarine, softened
100g / 4oz drained stewed apple or canned apple sauce
50g / 2oz raisins
25g / 1oz walnuts, chopped
1 egg, beaten
15ml / 1tbls black treacle

SERVES 8-10

1 Lightly grease a 900g / 2lb loaf dish. Sift the flour, ginger, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt into a bowl. Stir in the sugar.
2 Rub in the margarine, using the fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
3 Beat in remaining ingredients using an electric mixer for 1 minute, or by hand for 2 minutes. Spread evenly in the dish.
4 Place on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7-12 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn every 2-3 minutes, until slightly springy in the centre.
5 Stand for 10 minutes, then turn out and cool on a wire rack.

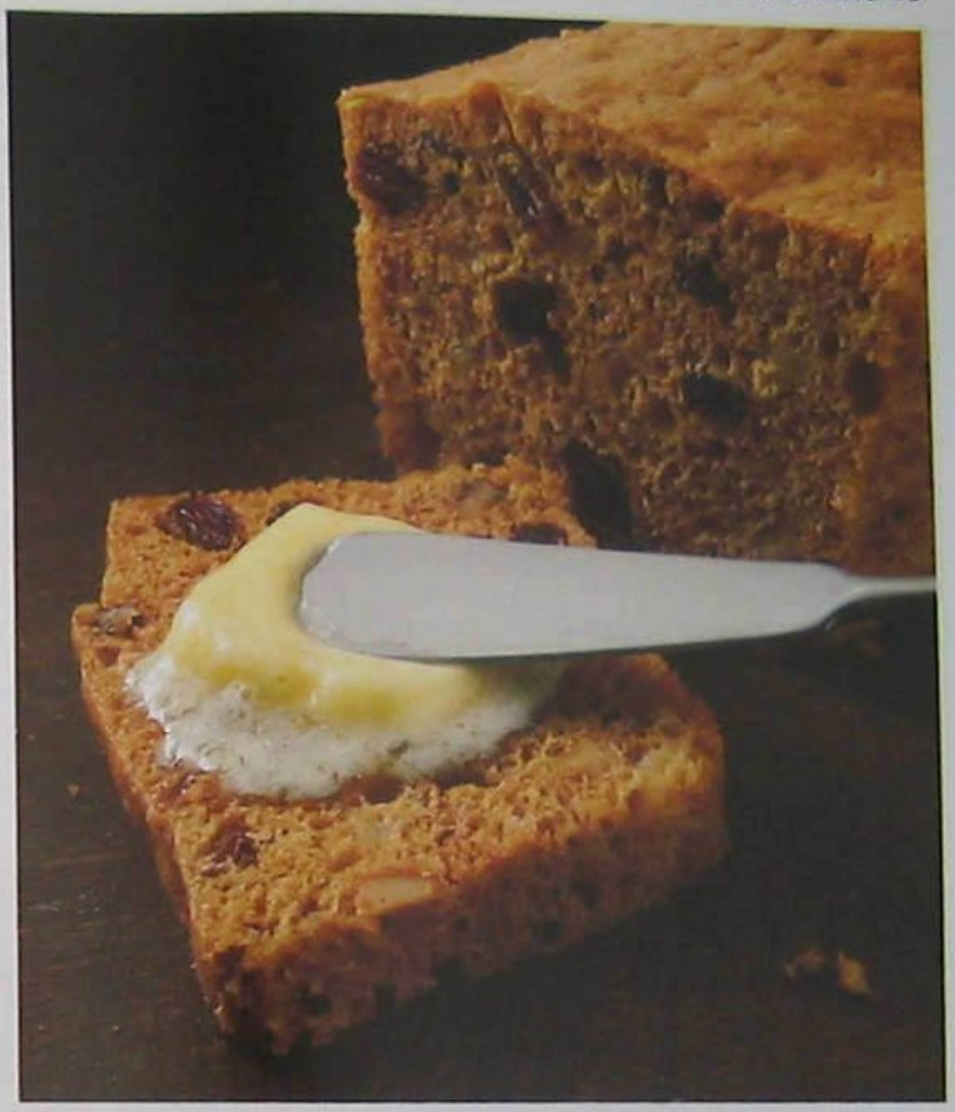
Chocolate courgette cake

10 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

100g / 4oz plain flour, sifted
30ml / 2tbls cocoa, sifted
175g / 6oz caster sugar
4ml / ¾tsp baking powder
pinch of salt
60ml / 4tbls vegetable oil
50g / 2oz butter margarine
1 egg, beaten
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
1 large courgette, grated
65g / 2½oz chocolate chips
45ml / 3tbls walnuts, chopped
Dark chocolate frosting (see Part 35, page 966)

SERVES 12-16



Above: *Ginger and Apple Bread*
Below: *Chocolate Courgette Cake*

1 Lightly grease a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in rectangular dish and line the base with greaseproof paper.
2 Place all ingredients, except frosting, in a large bowl and beat thoroughly with an electric mixer at low speed for about 2 minutes.
3 Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared dish. Place the dish on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 6 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn once.
4 Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 4-6 minutes, or until a wooden cocktail stick inserted into the centre of cake comes out cleanly.
5 Stand for 10 minutes, then turn out and cool on a wire rack. Spread chocolate frosting evenly over cake. Cut into squares.

Roast chicken portions

Lean and tender, chicken portions are one of the most versatile meats. Microwave-roast them with a sauce or special glaze, then sit back and enjoy the compliments.

Ready-portioned chicken is the perfect convenience food — easily available, simple to cook and a firm family favourite. Buy either leg or breast portions depending on the recipe.

Roasting chicken

With just a little cunning — using a browning dish or rubbing the skin with a browning agent — it is possible to achieve the appetizing and tasty appearance of roast chicken. Pierce the skin all over with a sharp knife or a fork before microwaving, so that excess fat can escape, then arrange portions with the boniest parts uppermost and to the centre to encourage even

cooking. Turn once and rearrange portions halfway through microwaving time.

Since fat will spit, a sheet of greaseproof paper (lightly greased to prevent it sticking) placed over the portions will help keep the inside of the cooker clean. The portions themselves will still have a roasted finish, provided you brown the skin first or use a coating. For a really crispy finish, pop it under the grill (see Cook's notes).

Spicy Roast Chicken

Spicy roast chicken

17 mins

Standing time: none

8 chicken thighs (about 1.2kg / 2¾lb total weight)
coarsely chopped parsley, to garnish

MARINADE
60ml / 4tbls vegetable oil
45ml / 3tbls white wine vinegar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground turmeric
2.5ml / ½tsp curry paste
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Make the marinade; mix oil, vinegar, turmeric, curry paste and seasoning in a large shallow dish.
2 Pierce the chicken thighs all over with a fork, then add to dish and coat on all sides with the marinade. Cover loosely and marinate in the refrigerator for 4-5 hours to absorb the flavours.
3 Arrange chicken in a single layer, skin side up with boniest parts to the centre, in a large shallow dish. Cover with buttered greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes.
4 Turn chicken thighs over and microwave for a further 7-8 minutes or until the meat is tender and the juices run clear.
5 Place chicken thighs under a hot grill and cook as directed in the Cook's notes (below) to give a rich golden finish if liked. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

VARIATION
Herby chicken thighs: omit curry paste and turmeric from the marinade and substitute 5ml / 1tsp dried tarragon or 2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil, 2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano and 1 garlic clove.

Cook's notes

To give a really golden-brown effect to a finished chicken dish, place the chicken portions under a hot grill for 2-3 minutes after microwaving, or until the skin begins to crisp and colour.

Chicken with Mushroom Rice

Slimmer's notes

Chicken is always a good bet for weight-watchers. Remove the skin before marinating and cover thighs with non-stick baking paper not buttered greaseproof paper. The spicy chicken thighs work out at just 240Cal / 1010kJ per portion. Stand for 3 minutes instead of browning after microwaving.

Chicken with mushroom rice

30 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

4 chicken portions
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
2.5cm / 1in piece fresh root ginger, peeled and chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
50g / 2oz mushrooms, chopped
225g / 8oz long-grain rice
575ml / 1pt boiling chicken stock
pepper
15ml / 1tbls honey

SERVES 4

1 Pierce chicken portions all over with a fork. Heat a large browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions.
2 Brush the dish with 15ml / 1tbls of the oil; immediately add chicken portions, skin side down, and press down well until sizzling dies down. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes. Remove chicken from dish with any juices and set aside.
3 Place remaining oil in dish with the celery, onion, ginger and garlic. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
4 Stir in mushrooms, rice, stock and pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, or until most of the stock has been absorbed.
5 Arrange chicken portions over the rice, skin side up and with the meatiest parts to the edges of the dish. Brush chicken skins with honey. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until chicken is cooked. Cover and stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Golden chicken with beans

19 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

350g / 12oz packet frozen sliced green beans
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
20ml / 4tsp vegetable oil
40g / 1½oz flaked almonds
pepper
1 egg yolk
15ml / 1tbls water
15ml / 1tbls browned or golden breadcrumbs
4 chicken breasts on the bone, skinned
30ml / 2tbls plain flour

SERVES 4

1 Place green beans still in their packet on a plate; pierce the wrapping, then microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5-6 minutes until completely thawed. Drain.
2 Mix the beans with 15ml / 1tbls soy sauce, 10ml / 2tsp oil and the flaked almonds in a large shallow dish. Season with pepper and reserve.
3 Beat the egg yolk with remaining soy sauce and the water in a shallow dish. Spread the breadcrumbs over a plate.
4 Place the chicken breasts in a large polythene bag with the flour and shake until evenly coated. Dip the chicken into the egg mixture, then coat with breadcrumbs.
5 Arrange the chicken on a large plate with the thickest parts facing outwards. Cover with buttered greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes. Turn the chicken over and microwave for a further 5-6 minutes.
6 Arrange the chicken over green beans, meaty side uppermost. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until the meat is tender and the juices run clear. Cover and allow to stand for 3 minutes before serving.

Golden Chicken with Beans

Cook's notes

Always remember to take care when handling a heated browning dish and remove from the cooker with oven gloves or towel.

Microtips

Always check that chicken is cooked through at the end of the minimum recommended microwaving time by piercing the flesh with a knife through the meatiest part next to the bone.

If cooked, the meat should be tender and white or brown and the meat juices should run clear. If the flesh or juices are at all pink, microwave for a further minute or so and test again.

Tangy chicken portions

20½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

185g / 6½oz jar cranberry sauce or redcurrant jelly
15ml / 1tbls light soft brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls orange juice
2.5ml / ½tsp grated orange zest
salt and pepper
4 chicken portions
30ml / 2tbls Worcestershire sauce
parsley and orange slices, to garnish

SERVES 4

How to microwave Tangy chicken portions

Combine *the sauce, sugar, orange juice, orange zest and seasoning in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until the sauce has melted, stirring once. Set aside.*

Pierce *the chicken portions all over with a fork or skewer to allow excess fat to escape during microwaving, and to prevent the skin bursting. Arrange the chicken, bony side up, on a roasting rack. Brush with half of the Worcestershire sauce. Cover with buttered greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes.*

Brush *the chicken portions lightly with some of the prepared redcurrant jelly or cranberry and orange glaze. Turn the portion over and brush with the remaining Worcestershire sauce. Rearrange the pieces slightly on the roasting rack to ensure that each portion is evenly cooked. Cover again with the buttered greaseproof paper and continue microwaving at 100% (High) for a further 5-6 minutes.*

Brush *with glaze; microwave for another 3-6 minutes, or until cooked. Cover and stand for 3 minutes. Heat the remaining glaze at 100% (High) for 30 seconds; spoon over chicken.*

Stuffed chicken thighs

15 mins

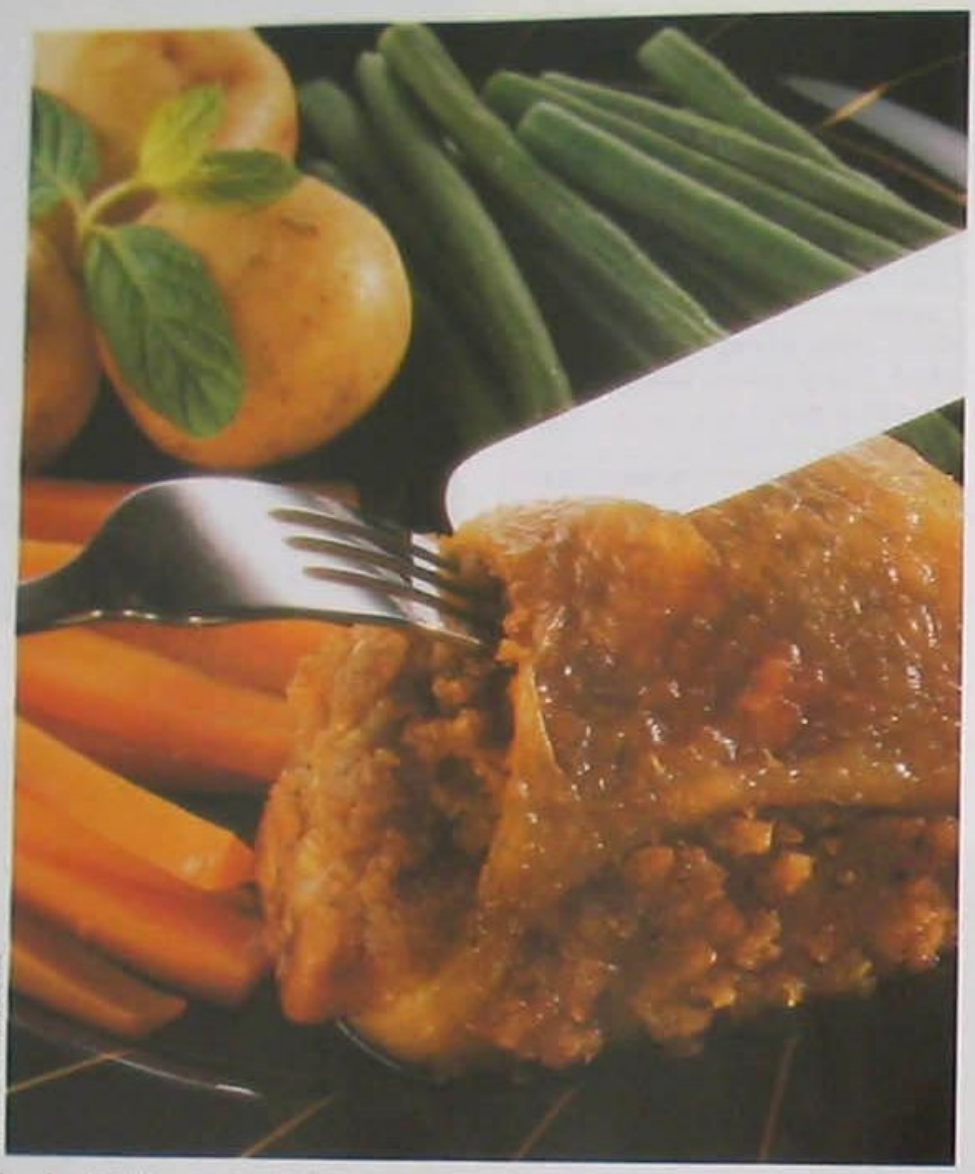
Standing time: 3 mins

1 small onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
100g / 4oz herb sausagemeat
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz wholemeal breadcrumbs
4 large chicken thighs (about 700g / 1½lb total weight)

SERVES 4

Freezer notes

If using frozen chicken portions, make sure they are completely thawed before cooking. Arrange them, with thinnest parts to the centre, on a large plate. Cover loosely and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 8-10 minutes per 450g / 1lb, turning portions once. Cover any areas which become warm with small smooth pieces of well-secured foil. Stand for 10 minutes before cooking. (If thawing less than 450g / 1lb and the edges start to cook, complete thawing at room temperature.)



ANDREW WHITTUCK

How to microwave Stuffed chicken thighs

Combine *onion, celery, oil, sausagemeat and seasoning in a large jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring and mashing once. Stir in the breadcrumbs.*

Lift *skin on each chicken thigh and press a quarter of the stuffing over the flesh. Pull skin over stuffing. Arrange chicken on a roasting rack in a shallow dish, stuffed sides up.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes. Rearrange and microwave for a further 4-6 minutes until chicken is tender and meat juices run clear. Cover and stand for 3 minutes.*

Bright starts

No one ever has enough time in the morning. Try these quick and tasty recipes in your microwave and you'll wonder how you ever managed breakfast without it.

Every moment is precious in the morning — and this is when the microwave really comes into its own. Use it for eggs, bacon, French toast or even to make your cold morning muesli into a satisfying hot treat.

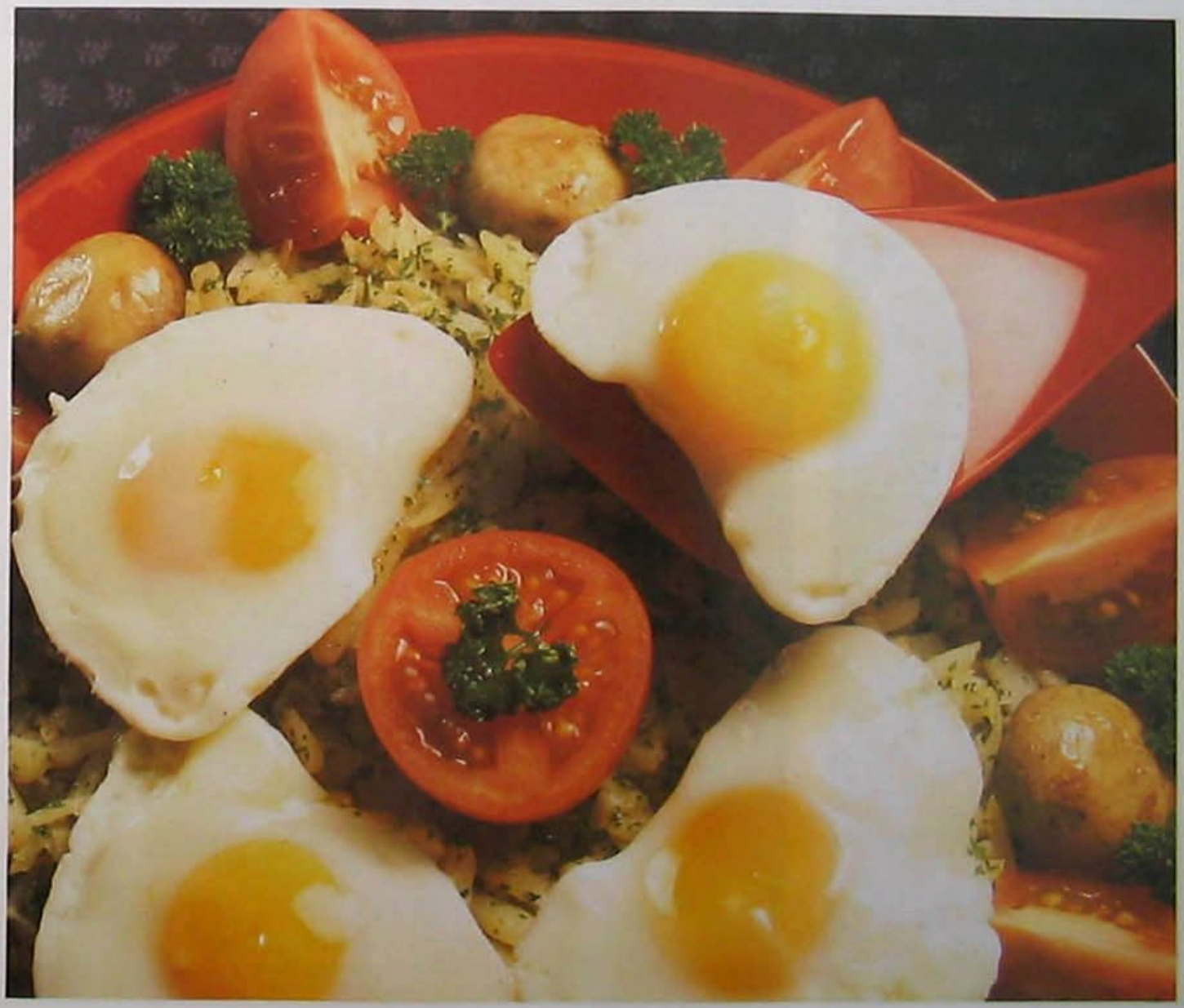
A warming bowl of porridge makes a healthy start to the day. With the microwave, making porridge is clean and fuss-free. There's no danger of the porridge scorching and no sticky pans.

Bacon done in the microwave is not only speedy, but also demands less attention. You can get on with other things while the microwave cooks the bacon for you.

The microwave also takes the fuss and especially the mess out of cooking eggs. Scrambled eggs come out light and fluffy, without sticking to the dish and 'poaching' eggs — without water — means that they virtually cook themselves. However, you must remember to pierce the yolks with a cocktail stick or small skewer to prevent them from exploding.

Cooking in batches can also be a boon at breakfast. Underdone scrambled eggs can be reheated as needed and individual bowls of porridge can be prepared in advance to be heated up when you want them during the rush to get to work and school.

Breakfast Platter



RAY DUNS

Breakfast platter

19¼ mins

Standing time: 1 min

1 large onion, grated
600g /1lb 5oz frozen grated potatoes (Rösti) or 700g / 1½lb fresh potatoes, finely grated and rinsed
30ml /2tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper to taste
50g /2oz butter
100g / 4oz button mushrooms
2 tomatoes, cut into wedges
4 eggs
parsley to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Heat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to manufacturer's instructions.
2 Mix onion and frozen potato.
3 Place 40g /1½oz butter on the heated browning dish and swirl it round. Spread potato and onion mixture in the dish and press down. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Turn potatoes over and stir in parsley and salt and pepper to taste. Cook for a further 7-8 minutes at 100% (High), stirring every minute.
4 Put 15g / ½oz butter into a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, to melt. Stir in mushrooms and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Drain.
5 Break eggs into an 18cm / 7in dish. Pierce the yolks with a cocktail stick. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Stand, covered, for 1 minute.
6 Place the potato mixture on microwave-proof serving plate. Arrange mushrooms and tomato wedges around the potatoes. Cover and reheat at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes. Separate the eggs using a knife and arrange on the serving plate. Garnish.

Microtips

To reheat scrambled egg for one, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 40 seconds; stir every 10 seconds.

Cheesy bacon toast

4 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

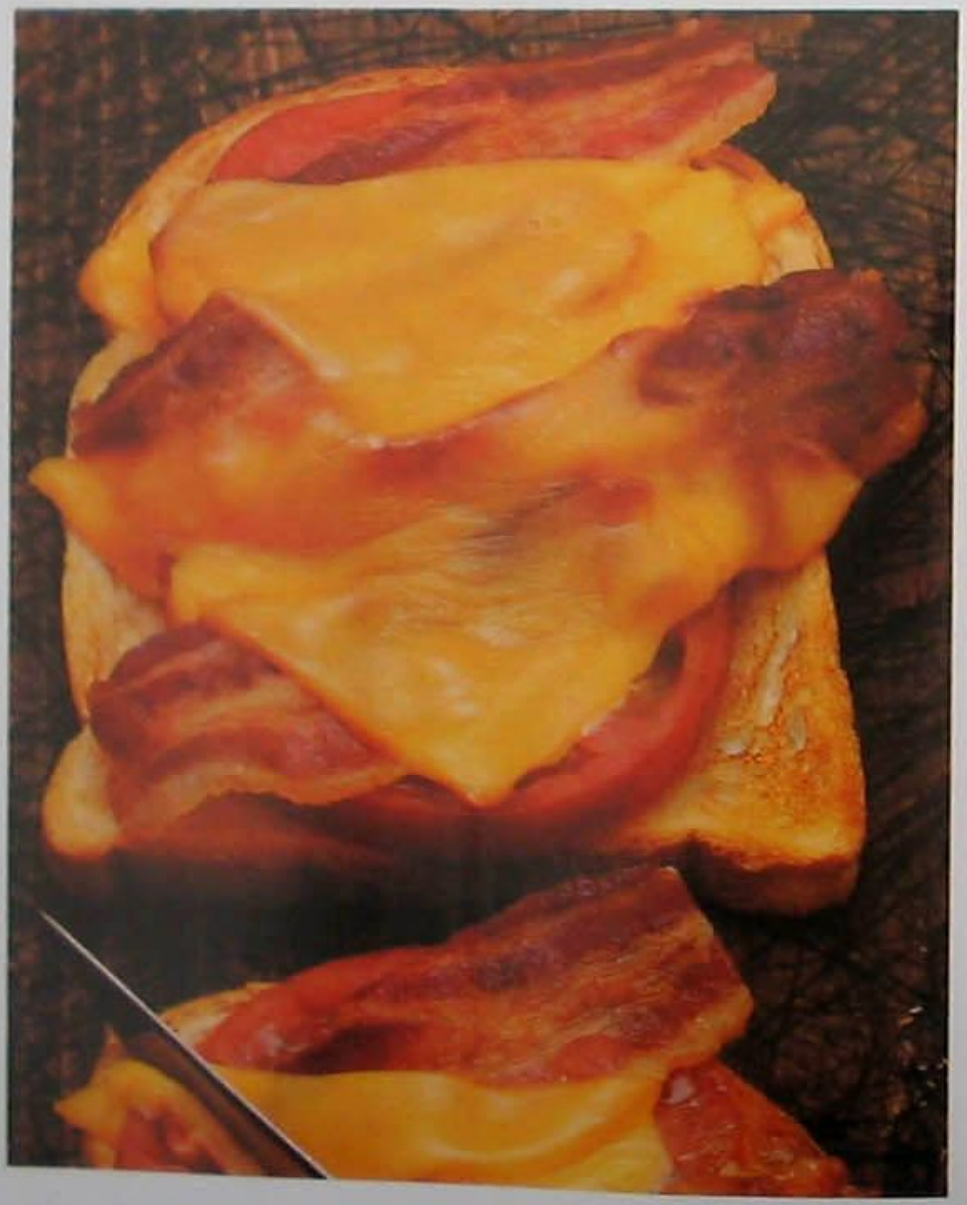
6 rashers streaky bacon, rinds removed
2 tomatoes, sliced
4 slices bread, toasted
2 slices processed cheese, cut in half diagonally

SERVES 2

1 Place the bacon on a double thickness of absorbent paper and cover with two more layers. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4½ minutes; remove from cooker although it looks slightly underdone. Stand for 5 minutes.
2 Assemble the toasts (see Step, right).
3 Place two of the bacon topped toasts on absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, until cheese melts, repeat with remaining toasts.

To assemble the Toasts

Arrange *tomato on toast. Cut rashers in half and place on tomato; overlap cheese on top.*



How to microwave bacon on a roasting rack

A roasting rack *gives bacon a meatier texture. Cover with absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes per rasher for up to six rashers; ¾-1 minute per rasher for more than six. Stand 5 minutes.*

Old-fashioned oatmeal

10 mins

Standing time: 2-2½ mins

Medium or coarse oatmeal is the traditional Scottish basis for porridge. Quick porridge oats have been specially processed to give a smoother consistency.

75g / 3oz medium oatmeal
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
850ml / 1½pt water

SERVES 4

1 Mix oats and salt together in a 2.5L / 4½pt bowl. Stir in water.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, stirring once. Let stand for 2-2½ minutes.

Family Porridge with brown sugar

Family porridge

9 mins

Standing time: 2-2½ mins

100g / 4oz quick porridge oats
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
775ml / 28fl oz water

SERVES 4

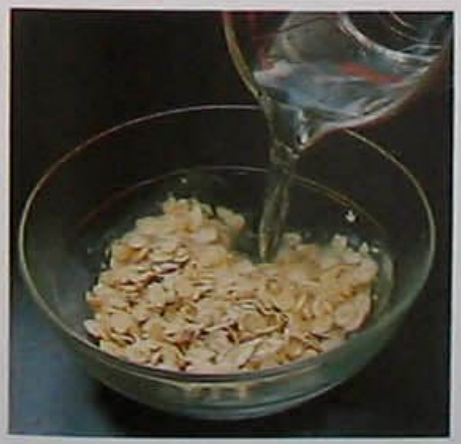
Family porridge for 2: Mix 75g / 3oz oats, pinch salt and 500ml / 18fl oz water in a 1.4L / 2½pt bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes. Stand for 2-2½ minutes. Spoon into two individual bowls and serve.

Cook's notes

Porridge is delicious topped with a pat of butter and sweetened with a sprinkling of brown sugar, honey or golden syrup.

To reheat one serving of porridge; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes.

How to microwave Family porridge



Measure *oats and salt into a 2.5L / 4½pt bowl. Stir in the water. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes. Stir well.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for a further 4½-5 minutes, or until thickened. Stand for 2-2½ minutes. Stir and spoon into individual bowls.*

Super scrambled eggs

4½ mins

Standing time: 1 min

1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
6 eggs
30ml / 2tbls milk
salt and pepper to taste
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
2 tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
50g / 2oz Mozzarella cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Combine green pepper and butter in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until the butter is melted and the green pepper is hot.
2 Beat the eggs with the milk, salt and pepper to taste, and oregano in a small bowl. Mix into the green pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4½ minutes, or until the eggs are soft and moist, stir well after 1½ minutes, 1 minute, then every 30 seconds.
3 Stir in tomatoes and cheese. Cover and stand for 1 minute.

Syrup toasties

8½ mins

Standing time: none

2 eggs, beaten
30ml / 2tbls milk
good pinch of ground cinnamon
5ml / 1tsp soft brown sugar
75g / 3oz butter
60ml / 4tbls golden syrup
4 thick slices white bread

SERVES 2

1 Heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions.
2 Beat egg, milk, cinnamon and sugar together. Pour on to a plate. Dip bread into the egg mixture.
3 Swirl half the butter on browning dish. Press on bread. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes.
4 Turn bread over; rearrange. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Remove from dish; top with rest of butter.
5 Microwave syrup in a jug at 100% (High) for 30 seconds.

Right: *Double-decker French Toast*
Below left: *Super Scrambled Eggs*
Below right: *Syrup Toasties*

Double-decker French toast

8½ mins

Standing time: none

2 eggs
30ml / 2tbls milk
salt and pepper
4 small thick slices white bread
50g / 2oz butter
100g / 4oz ham, thinly sliced
made mustard to taste
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, sliced
30ml / 2tbls soured cream

SERVES 2

1 Heat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to maker's instructions.
2 Meanwhile, beat together the egg, milk and salt and pepper to taste. Pour on to a plate. Dip both sides of bread into the egg.
3 Swirl butter over the base of heated browning dish. Press on bread and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes.
4 Turn bread over. Top with ham, mustard and cheese.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for a further 2-2½ minutes, or until cheese melts. Sandwich bread together and place on a serving dish. Top with soured cream.

Microtips

To heat milk with no risk of boiling over, microwave 575ml / 1pt in a tall, 1L / 1¾pt jug for 3-3½ minutes at 100% (High). Microwave 275ml / ½pt for 2-2½ minutes.

Sunday brunch omelettes

4 mins

Standing time: ½-1 min

½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 small onion, chopped
4 rashers bacon, rind removed, chopped
60ml / 4tbls chopped mushrooms
4 eggs, beaten
15ml / 1tbls milk
large pinch of mustard powder
salt and pepper
4 slices bread, toasted conventionally, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Combine green pepper, onion and bacon in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2½ minutes, or until vegetables are tender.
2 Stir in chopped mushrooms, eggs, milk and seasoning. Pour into four saucers.
3 Microwave two at a time at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until eggs are almost set. Stir once or twice during cooking.
4 Let stand for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Serve with hot buttered toast.

VARIATION
Warm croissants make a special alternative to toast.

RAY DUNN

Apricot and Apple Muesli

Apricot and apple muesli

5 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

75g / 3oz dried apricots
150ml / ¼pt orange juice
1 large red apple
175g / 6oz muesli breakfast cereal
hot milk (see Microtips) to serve

SERVES 4

1 Place apricots and orange juice in a deep bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until apricots are softened and heated through. Stand for 5 minutes.
2 Quarter, core and chop apple.
3 Divide the muesli between four cereal bowls. Add the chopped apple to the apricots and mix well, then stir into the muesli. Pour over hot milk to serve.

Microwaving cabbage

Versatile cabbages are crunchy, colourful and rich in vitamin C. Serve them simply cooked, spiced, sauced, casseroled or rolled round a deliciously moist ham and cheese filling.

Crisp and crunchy cabbages make a healthy vegetable accompaniment for family meals, but they can easily be dressed up with added flavourings or a sauce for a smarter dish. To preserve all the goodness, microwave cabbage in just a little liquid until just tender — it is a rich source of vitamin C, high in fibre and low in calories. Longer cooking develops a strong odour and flavour.

Green, red and Savoy cabbage may be cooked in stock or wine and served with butter, salt and pepper or seasoned with caraway. Green, white or Savoy cabbage is delicious topped with cheese sauce.

Walnut Cabbage Casserole

Chinese leaves* are cylindrical in shape and milder in flavour than round cabbages. Use in oriental dishes or dress with melted butter, bacon, soured cream, Parmesan cheese or lemon juice.

Walnut cabbage casserole

8 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz red cabbage, trimmed and thickly shredded
30ml / 2tbls red wine
25g / 1oz butter
225g / 8oz white cabbage, trimmed and thickly shredded
30ml / 2tbls water
50g / 2oz shelled walnuts, coarsely chopped
salt and pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Combine the red cabbage, wine and half the butter in a small casserole. Combine the white cabbage, water and remaining butter in another small casserole. Cover both and microwave together at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, or until the cabbages are tender, stirring once. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.
2 Combine the cabbages and the walnuts and toss together until thoroughly mixed. Season to taste and serve.

VARIATION
For a vegetarian alternative, stir 175g / 6oz soaked beansprouts into the cooked cabbage, leave to stand then add the walnuts.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Chinese leaves; known as Chinese cabbage; Pak Soi as Pak Choy.

Cook's notes

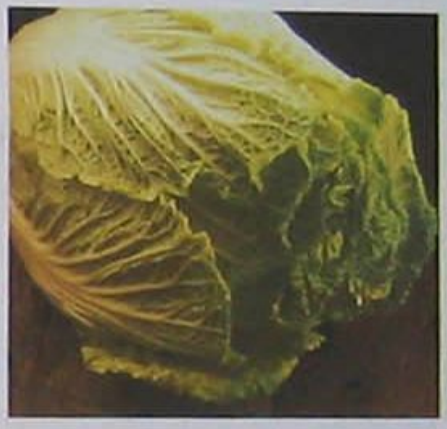
Use a stainless steel knife to shred red cabbage, to avoid drawing the colour.

Also, adding a teaspoon of an acid such as vinegar or lemon juice when microwaving will preserve the colour.

How to choose cabbage

Choose *heads of green, white or red cabbage which feel firm and heavy, with smooth leaves. Savoy cabbage has pale green to yellow green crinkly leaves, formed in a looser, lighter head similar to a crisp lettuce — it is milder in flavour than some other green cabbages. Check outside leaves are relatively clean and free from tears, insect holes or mould.*

Select *firm heads of cabbage with 'tight' leaves. Avoid those with soft spots and damaged or discoloured leaves. Wilting leaves indicate the cabbage is stale.*



Chinese *leaves may be long and cylindrical or squat. Choose crisp, compact heads with pale green leaves. When fresh, the leaves snap cleanly from the base stalk.*

Pak Soi* *(also known as Bok Choy) should be firm with very white stalks and shiny dark green leaves. This spinach-like vegetable has a tendency to look floppy; this does not mean that the vegetable is not fresh. Leaves and stalks are equally tender, and can be microwaved together.*

Microwave times for cabbage

TYPE	AMOUNT	MICROWAVE TIME AT 100% (HIGH)	PROCEDURE
Green, red, Savoy, white (quartered)	450g / 1lb	8-10 mins	Arrange like wheel spokes in shallow casserole. Add 45-60ml / 3-4tbls water. Stand for 5 minutes.
Green (shredded)	450g / 1lb	7-9 mins	Place in casserole with 30ml / 2tbls water. Stand for 5 minutes.
Red, white (shredded)	450g / 1lb	8-10 mins	Place in casserole with 30ml / 2tbls water, 30ml / 2tbls vinegar and 30ml / 2tbls sugar if liked. Stand for 3-5 minutes. Omit the vinegar and sugar for white cabbage.
Savoy (shredded)	450g / 1lb	9-11 mins	Place in casserole with 90-120ml / 6-8tbls water. Stand for 4-6 minutes.
Chinese (sliced)	450g / 1lb	6-8 mins	Place in casserole with 30-45ml / 2-3tbls water. Stand for 3-5 minutes.
Pak soi (sliced)	450g / 1lb	6-8 mins	Place in casserole with 30ml / 2tbls water. Stand for 3-5 minutes.

How to store cabbage

Store *cabbage whole or in large pieces (small pieces wilt quickly.) Store, wrapped, in the refrigerator.*

Use *Savoy, Chinese and Pak Soi soon after buying. Green, red and white cabbages will keep for about one week. Wash and trim cabbage just before using, discarding any tough or damaged outer leaves.*

How to prepare cabbage for microwaving

Cut *green, white, red and Savoy cabbage into quarters. Cut away and discard the central core and shred finely.*

Wash *Pak Soi thoroughly and carefully, then drain. Cut both the stalks and leaves together into 12mm / ½in slices.*

Trim *and wash Chinese leaves just before microwaving. Trim the base then separate the leaves and cut cross-ways into 2.5cm / 1in strips.*

Ham and cheese cabbage rolls

9 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

6 large white cabbage leaves (see Microtips, below)
30ml / 2tbls water

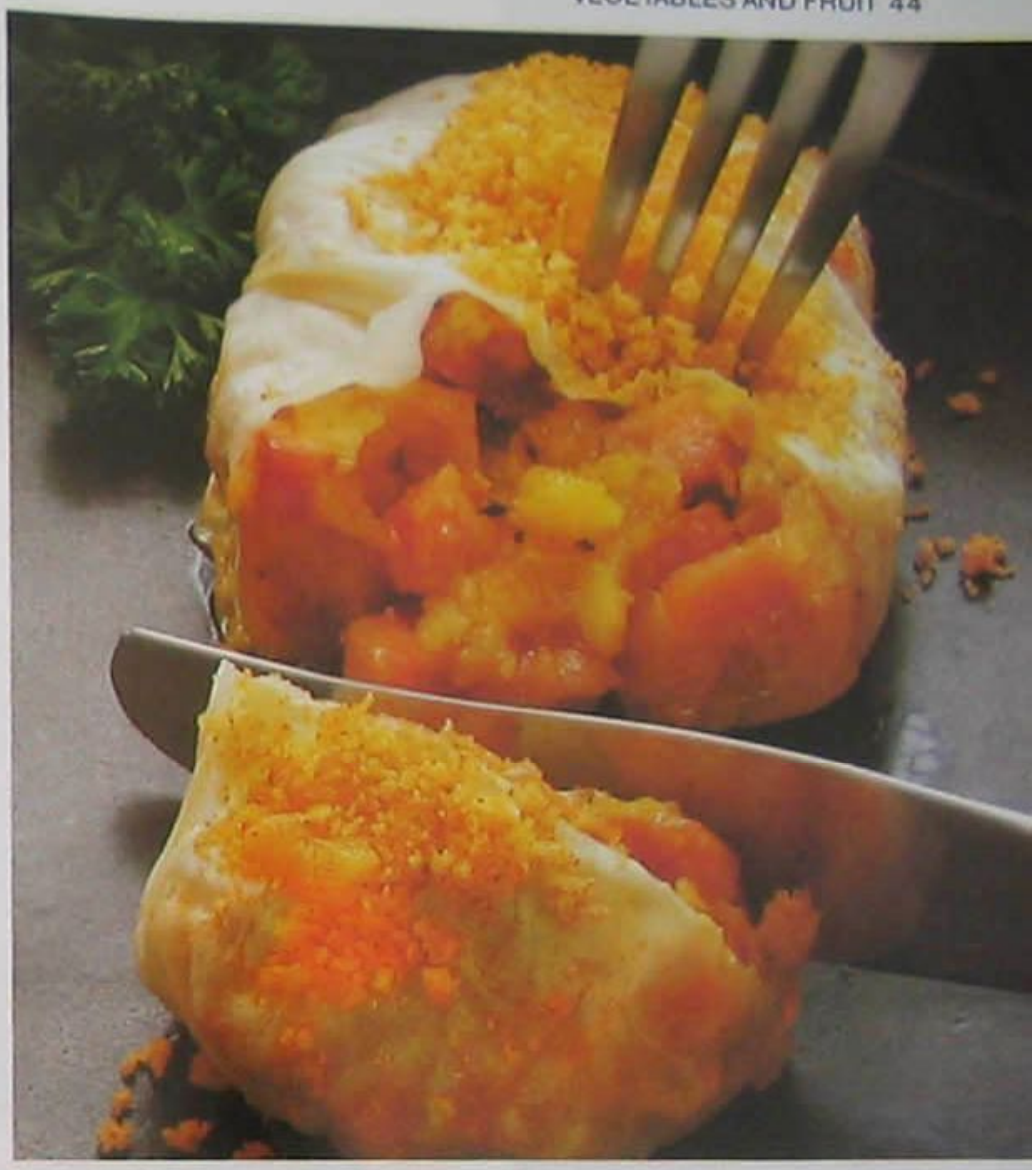
FILLING
225g / 8oz cooked lean ham, finely chopped
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
1 egg, beaten
45ml / 3tbls fresh breadcrumbs
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper

TOPPING
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
25g / 1oz Cheddar cheese, grated
1.5ml / ¼tsp paprika

SERVES 6-8

Microtips

To remove leaves from a whole head, microwave the whole cabbage at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until six outer leaves soften and can be separated easily.



How to microwave Ham and cheese cabbage rolls

Cut *out the thick stalk from each cabbage leaf in a 'V'. Rinse the leaves and place in a large shallow dish. Add the water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until leaves are pliable. Drain and set aside.*

Combine *filling ingredients in a bowl. Divide between the leaves, fold in sides and roll up. Secure each roll with a wooden cocktail stick, if necessary, and place seam-side down in a greased large, shallow dish; cover.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes until filling is set; rotate a half turn once. Stand 2 minutes; remove cocktail sticks. Combine topping ingredients and sprinkle over rolls. Microwave, uncovered, for 2 minutes.*

Cabbage and noodles

6 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Cabbage and pasta is a popular European combination. Serve hot, with sliced meats.

350g / 12oz white cabbage, trimmed and shredded
1 small onion, thinly sliced and separated into rings
25g / 1oz butter
2.5ml / ½tsp poppy seeds
salt and pepper
175g / 6oz egg noodles

SERVES 4-6

1 Combine the cabbage, onion, butter and poppy seeds in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8 minutes, or until the cabbage is tender, stirring once. Let stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Season to taste.

2 Meanwhile, cook the noodles conventionally according to the packet instructions and drain well.

3 Stir the noodles into the cabbage mixture, tossing together well. Serve immediately.

Left: *Cabbage and Noodles*
Below: *Cabbage in Cheese Sauce*

Cabbage in cheese sauce

14 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

700g / 1½lb Savoy cabbage
60ml / 4tbls water

CHEESE SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter, cut into pieces
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

RAY DUNS

1 Trim the cabbage and cut into quarters. Arrange like wheel spokes in a large shallow casserole.
2 Add the water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes until tender; rotate a half turn once. Stand, covered, 5 minutes.
3 Make the sauce: melt the butter in a covered jug or bowl at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds. Stir in the flour and blend in the milk.
4 Microwave, uncovered, for a further 3-4 minutes, until the sauce is smooth and thick. Stir in 50g / 2oz cheese, salt and pepper to taste.
5 Drain the cabbage, pour over the cheese sauce and sprinkle with the remaining cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds until the cheese has melted.

Slimmer's notes

Make the sauce with 15g / ½oz butter, skimmed milk and Edam cheese. You will then have a nutritious and satisfying meal, good for slimmers with only 180Cal / 755kJ per portion.

Spiced Red Cabbage

Spiced red cabbage

8 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

30ml / 2tbls unsweetened apple juice
15ml / 1tbls soft light brown sugar
10ml / 2tsp cider vinegar
large pinch of ground cinnamon
pinch of ground cloves
450g / 1lb red cabbage, trimmed and finely shredded
1 cooking apple, cored and diced
1 onion, finely chopped
15g / ½oz butter, cut into small pieces
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 In a deep casserole, blend together the apple juice, sugar, vinegar, cinnamon and cloves. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes, stirring twice.
2 Let stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Season to taste and stir.

STAR RECIPE

Quenelles with basil sauce

Quenelles are French dumplings — but not like any you've tried before. They are so light and creamy they literally melt in the mouth to make the perfect main course for your next special meal.

Quenelles are a natural for the microwave. Traditionally they must be poached in barely simmering water to preserve their fluffy texture, but with the microwave you achieve the same result.

To make these delicate dumplings, a firm-fleshed fish is minced and combined with a *panada* — a smooth binding sauce which gives the quenelles their special 'soufflé-like' consistency. In this recipe, monkfish is used, but pike, sole, whiting, or John Dory may be

substituted. If necessary, the minced or processed fish may then be sieved to remove bones.

Quenelles are usually served with a sauce. The sauce chosen here, lightly flavoured with basil and delicately coloured with tomato purée, complements the fine-textured dumplings perfectly and is very easy to make. Serve quenelles on a bed of plain boiled noodles (conventionally cooked) and with a mixed salad for an impressive main course. If you prefer, serve them simply bathed in the sauce — without any accompaniments — as a dinner party starter. In this case they will serve eight.

Cook's notes

Quenelles are also delicious cold; omit the sauce, garnish quenelles with chopped parsley and serve with tomato salad.

Once you have mastered traditional quenelles made with fish, you can vary them by using cooked chicken, turkey, veal or ham instead of fish.

Quenelles with basil sauce

18 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb monkfish tail fillet, skinned and cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes
90ml / 6tbls milk
175g / 6oz fresh white breadcrumbs
100g / 4oz butter, softened and diced
2 eggs, beaten
nutmeg, salt and pepper

SAUCE
50g / 2oz butter
1 onion, finely chopped
8 fresh basil leaves, shredded or 5ml / 1tsp dried basil
50g / 2oz plain flour
575ml / 1pt hot fish stock
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 6

How to microwave Quenelles with basil sauce

Mince *or finely chop the fish in a food processor. Stir milk into breadcrumbs, then beat into fish with butter, eggs and nutmeg, adding salt and pepper to taste.*

Using *two dessertspoons, form the fish mixture into 24 evenly-sized ovals and arrange them in a circle around the edges of two large, lightly-buttered flat dishes.*

Cover *and microwave in two batches at 70% (Medium-High) for 4-5 minutes. Turn the quenelles over halfway through cooking. Set aside, covered, while you make the sauce.*

Make sauce: *place butter, onion and basil in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes until the onion is soft. Stir in the flour, stock and tomato purée.*

Microwave, *uncovered, for 3-4 minutes at 100% (High) until thickened, stirring twice during cooking. Taste and season carefully, especially if stock is pre-salted.*

Arrange *quenelles on a serving dish. Coat with the sauce, cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 3-5 minutes until hot. Serve with plain boiled noodles.*

RAY DUNS

Cooking with spices

Add spice to your cooking! Whether whole or ground, spices pep up a dull dish and add interest to a familiar one; the microwave enhances their flavour — so just a little goes a long way.

Microwaving accentuates the flavour of all spices. Their flavours, whether subtle or fiery, add zest to a wide variety of dishes.

Buying and storing spices

It is best to buy spices in small quantities and use within one to two months to enjoy them at their best. Avoid buying spices that have been standing on a shelf for a long time in glass bottles, especially if they are ground, as they will have less aroma and flavour. For the finest results, buy whole spices from speciality shops and grind small quantities at a time, as needed, using an electric mill or pestle and mortar. They will have more flavour than ready ground.

Store spices in small airtight jars or tins in a cool dark place. Although spice racks look attractive on the kitchen wall, the spices in the jars soon deteriorate if exposed to bright light.

Microwave cooking with spices

Cooking brings out the flavour of spices — and this is especially true in the microwave. This is an

PAUL WEBSTER

advantage because it means you can use less than normal. (Take care not to over-flavour food by being too heavy-handed.)

Experiment with different spices to see which combinations you like — some are hot, some aromatic — but just use a little of each to begin with. The same applies when using an unfamiliar spice for the first time — start off with a little and increase the amount if the flavour appeals.

To avoid spices tasting 'raw', it is a good idea to microwave them with a little oil for 1-2 minutes before adding the rest of the ingredients.

Curried Vegetables

Curried vegetables

11 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

Use a mixture of seasonal vegetables — carrots, potatoes, green pepper, cauliflower, turnips and aubergine to make a good combination.

30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
1 onion, finely chopped
2.5cm / 1in piece of ginger root, peeled and finely chopped
5ml / 1tsp black mustard seeds
1 green chilli, seeded and chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
7.5ml / 1½tsp turmeric
15ml / 1tbls ground coriander
700g / 1½lb fresh mixed vegetables, cut into small, even-sized pieces
30ml / 2tbls water
50g / 2oz creamed coconut, grated
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put the oil, onion, ginger root, mustard seeds, chilli, garlic, turmeric and coriander in a bowl and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until the onion is soft, stirring twice.
2 Add the vegetables and stir to coat with the spices. Add the water and coconut and stir well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-12 minutes, until the vegetables are just tender. Stir, season to taste and stand, covered, for 3 minutes.

Five spice beef

8 mins

Standing time: none

Chinese five spice powder (see chart) gives this oriental-style dish an unusual flavour.

30ml / 2tbls water
30ml / 2tbls dark soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce (optional)
5ml / 1tsp Chinese five spice powder
15ml / 3tsp cornflour

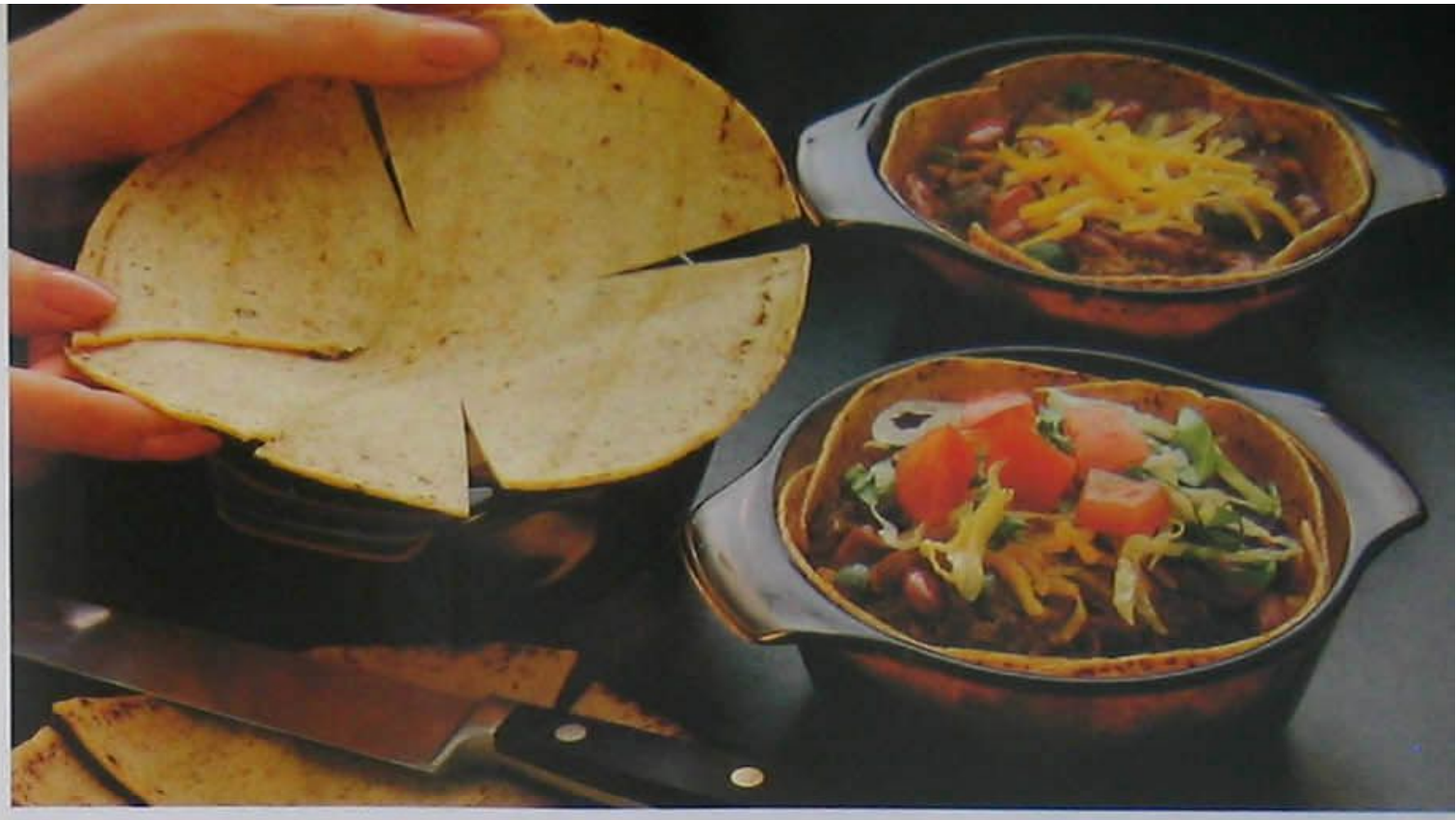
Five Spice Beef

pinch of garlic salt
450g / 1lb lean rump steak, thinly sliced across the grain
1 green pepper, cut in strips
2 tomatoes, quartered
4 spring onions, chopped

SERVES 4

1 In a large bowl, blend together the water, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, five spice powder, cornflour and garlic salt. Add the steak; stir until well coated. Stir in vegetables.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes or until the meat and green pepper are tender, stirring two or three times. Serve with fried rice or egg noodles.

SPICES/DESCRIPTION	USES
ALLSPICE Hard, dark brown berries also known as Jamaican pepper: whole or ground.	In both sweet and savoury dishes. Christmas cake, marinades, pickles.
CARAWAY Tiny curved seeds; very aromatic.	Popular in cabbage and pork dishes.
CARDAMOM Sold as whole pods, seeds, or ground.	Excellent in curries and pickles.
CAYENNE Hot pepper made from dried chillies.	Use sparingly. Good savoury garnish.
CHILLI Red or green chillies sold fresh, or dried, whole or ground in different strengths. Seeds are very hot.	Used in many curries and spicy meat dishes, especially Middle Eastern, South American and Spanish.
CINNAMON Sweet, spicy flavour and aroma.	In puddings, desserts, and hot drinks.
CLOVES The dried buds of a tropical tree. Whole or ground. Highly scented.	Good with sweet and savoury apple dishes. Used in pickling spices.
CORIANDER Delicate orange-y aroma and flavour. Sold as whole seeds or ground.	Good with pork, chicken and carrot dishes. Use in curries and Greek food.
CUMIN An aromatic seed. Also ground. Strong, distinctive flavour.	In Indian, Spanish and Mexican dishes. Often used in curry powders.
CHINESE FIVE SPICE POWDER Combination of star anise, cinnamon, Szechuan pepper, cloves and fennel.	Popular in Chinese cooking.
FENNEL Seeds of herb. Liquorice flavour.	Good with fish.
GINGER Knobby root of tropical plant. Sold fresh, dried or ground.	Gives subtly 'hot' flavour. Use in Oriental food, also cakes and breads.
MUSTARD Whole seeds, ground as powder or ready made. May be strong or mild.	Use sparingly to give hot flavour to sauces, dressings and relishes.
NUTMEG Best bought whole, and grated as needed. Ground nutmeg loses flavour.	Use in sweet and savoury dishes: also green vegetables, custards and cakes.
PAPRIKA Red pepper from dried sweet peppers. Flavour varies from hot to mild.	Adds colour and flavour, good garnish. Used in Hungarian goulash.
PEPPERCORNS Black peppers from dried, unripe berries; white from ripe berries. Green and pink peppercorns are pickled.	Black pepper is used in most savoury dishes. White pepper is best in pale sauces and creamy dishes.
SAFFRON The dried stamen of a type of crocus. Sold as threads or a powder. Very expensive. Threads need soaking first.	Use to flavour and colour savoury dishes, also cakes and sweet breads. In paella and bouillabaisse.
TURMERIC Hot flavour and bright colour.	Use to flavour and colour rice, chicken and seafood dishes.
VANILLA Available as dried pods, essence or synthetic flavouring.	Popular in ice cream, custards, sponge cake and milky puddings.



Mexican meatloaves

14½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

If only small tortillas are available, use three for each dish, making two cuts in each tortilla.

1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 onion, chopped
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
5ml / 1tsp ground cumin
5ml / 1tsp paprika
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cardamom (optional)
dash of Tabasco sauce
227g / 8oz can tomatoes, chopped
30ml / 2tbls tomato purée or paste
425g / 15oz can red kidney beans, drained
1 egg, beaten
salt and pepper
4 × 15cm / 6in corn tortillas or crêpes

TOPPING
25g / 1oz Cheddar cheese, grated
shredded lettuce
chopped tomato

SERVES 4

1 Combine the green pepper and onion in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes or until tender-crisp.
2 Add the beef, cumin, paprika, cardamom, Tabasco, the chopped tomatoes, tomato purée, kidney beans and beaten egg. Season.
3 If using tortillas, make four 5cm / 2in-deep slashes around the edge of each one. Place each tortilla in a 15cm / 6in diameter round serving dish. Overlap the edges to fit neatly. Crêpes are pliable and will not need cutting.
4 Fill each lined dish with a quarter of the meat mixture. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 13-15 minutes, until filling is firm.
5 Top each with a little grated cheese and leave to stand, covered for about 3 minutes to allow the cheese to melt. Garnish with chopped lettuce and tomato.

Devilled barbecue ribs

28 mins

Standing time: 6 mins

900g / 2lb Chinese pork ribs*
vegetable oil for brushing

DEVILLED BARBECUE SAUCE
1 small onion, finely chopped
5ml / 1tsp vegetable oil
150ml / ¼pt tomato ketchup or sauce
30ml / 2tbls sweet chilli sauce
30ml / 2tbls white wine vinegar
30ml / 2tbls demerara sugar
5ml / 1tsp made mustard
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic salt

SERVES 4

1 Combine the onion and oil for the sauce in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until the onion is soft, stirring once. Stir in the remaining sauce ingredients and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 1-2 minutes; stir once. Set aside.
2 Arrange half the ribs on a roasting rack and brush with a little oil. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes, rearranging once. Drain the ribs and transfer to a shallow dish. Repeat with the remaining ribs.
3 Brush enough sauce over the ribs to coat. Arrange half the ribs on the roasting rack, and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 6 minutes, turning over once and basting with the sauce once or twice. Transfer to a dish, cover with foil (shiny side in) and leave to stand for at least 3 minutes.
4 Cook the remaining ribs and leave to stand as before.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use spare ribs.

Ginger chicken and greens

12½ mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls flaked almonds
15g / ½oz butter
350g / 12oz boneless chicken breasts, skinned and cut into 12mm / ½in strips
100g / 4oz Pak Soi (see page 1311), coarsely shredded
1 carrot, very thinly sliced
6 spring onions, cut into 12mm / ½in lengths
225g / 8oz can bamboo shoots, rinsed, drained and roughly chopped

SAUCE
150ml / ¼pt chicken stock
15ml / 1tbls dark soy sauce
15ml / 1tbls dry sherry
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
2.5cm / 1in piece of ginger root, peeled and finely chopped
pinch of sugar
pinch of chilli powder
pinch of cayenne pepper

SERVES 4

1 Put the almonds and butter in a small bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3½-4½ minutes, or until the almonds are just beginning to brown, stirring once. Set aside.

2 In a large bowl, combine the chicken, Pak Soi, carrot and onions. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until the chicken is no longer pink, stirring twice. Stir in the bamboo shoots and set aside.

3 In another bowl, blend all the sauce ingredients together. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the mixture bubbles and thickens, stirring twice.

4 Stir the sauce into the chicken and vegetables, making sure they are thoroughly combined. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes or until piping hot. Serve, sprinkled with the almonds on a bed of boiled rice.

RAY DUNS

Right: *Fruits in Spiced Syrup*
Below: *Ginger Chicken and Greens*

Fruits in spiced syrup

4 mins

Standing time: none

½ small honeydew melon, peeled, seeded and cubed
2 seedless oranges, peeled and segmented
2 bananas, sliced
1 red-skinned dessert apple, cored and cut into chunks
1 peach, stoned and diced
thick Greek yoghurt, to serve

SYRUP
150g / 5oz demerara sugar
275ml / ½pt water
juice of 1 lemon
few drops of vanilla flavouring or 1 vanilla pod, slit,
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cloves or 3 whole cloves
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground allspice, or 6 whole allspice berries

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the syrup ingredients in a deep, heatproof bowl.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes to boil. Stir once.
3 Add the fruit and stir to coat. Cool a little before serving.

Cook-ahead confectionery

Confectionery-making is magic in the microwave — whip up sweet treats like mints, fudge or truffles, then deep-freeze. Thaw when needed for a little self-indulgence or to delight your friends.

Sweets are so clean and easy to make in the microwave that they are a real treat to do. You can extend their storage time, too, by keeping them in the freezer. So, when time permits, why not make up a batch quickly and cleanly by microwave, then just pop in the freezer? In this way, you will always have a reserve of delicious home-made treats ready to produce at a moment's notice with after-dinner coffee or a birthday party tea. Make up and freeze several of the recipes, so you have an impressive selection to hand.

Making sweets

There is no need to stir sweet mixtures constantly during cooking by microwave and there are no burnt pans to clean at the end. You will find that chocolate and caramels melt quickly and easily in next to no time.

Important pieces of equipment include a large heatproof bowl, as boiling sugar reaches very high

Peppermint Fancies

PAUL WEBSTER

temperatures. Always use oven gloves when handling the bowl, too. A sugar thermometer can be used where necessary, but do not leave it in mixture during microwaving. Sweet mixtures get very hot — do not leave them to cook unattended at any stage.

Freezing

The sweets here have a good freezer life, with some keeping well for up to six months. Others such as the Peppermint Creams keep only for one month.

To avoid damaging fragile sweets during freezing, open-freeze in a single layer until hardened, then pack securely in freezer bags. Store the bags in the top of the freezer to avoid crushing them, and remove as many as you need at a time.

Thawing sweets

As sugar attracts microwave energy, thawing sweets is most successfully done at a low setting — 20-30% (Defrost) — to prevent melting. Leave sweets to stand to complete thawing. To serve, transfer small, square or round sweets to sweet paper cases. Arrange a selection attractively on a plate.

Peppermint fancies

1 min

Thawing time: 1 min

Standing after thawing: 5-10 mins

100g / 4oz cream cheese
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
2.5ml / ½tsp peppermint flavouring
500g / 18oz icing sugar, sifted
1 drop of pink food colouring
1 drop of green food colouring

MAKES 40

1 Microwave the cream cheese in a bowl at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute. Add butter and flavouring. Beat in sugar until stiff.
2 Tint one-third of the mixture pale pink, another third green and leave the last third plain.
3 Using a piping bag fitted with a large star nozzle, pipe the mixture in 2.5-4cm / 1-1½in whirls on to a tray lined with non-stick baking paper (see Cook's notes, right). Leave to dry for 24 hours.
4 To freeze: open-freeze on a tray until firm. Pack in rigid container, separating layers with freezer tissue. Cover, seal, label and freeze no longer than 1 month.

TO SERVE

Remove half the mint creams and arrange in a single layer on a plate. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1 minute. Stand 5-10 minutes. Top the plain mints with angelica diamonds, the pink with pink crystallized rose petals and the green with crystallized violets.

Microtips

The time in the recipe time boxes includes microwaving time for the whole recipe. The thawing time is for one batch of sweets only.

Peanut brittle

12 mins

Thawing time: 1 min

Standing after thawing: 5 mins

450g / 1lb caster sugar
300g / 11oz* golden syrup
pinch of salt
300g / 11oz salted peanuts
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
7.5ml / 1½tsp vanilla flavouring
5ml / 1tsp baking powder

MAKES 900g / 2lb

1 Generously butter two large baking sheets. Mix together the sugar, syrup and salt in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-11 minutes, stirring once or twice.
2 Stir in the peanuts. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
3 Stir in the butter and flavouring. Stir in the baking powder until light and foamy. Pour half the mixture on to each baking sheet and spread thinly; cool.
4 To freeze: break into pieces, then open-freeze in a single layer on trays until firm. Wrap, label and freeze up to 3 months.

TO SERVE

Arrange half the pieces on a single layer on a plate or tray. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-1½ minutes. Stand 5 minutes.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use ¾ cup golden syrup.

Peanut Brittle

Cook's notes

When piping the Peppermint Fancies, pipe the plain mixture first, then the pink one. Wash and thoroughly dry the bag and nozzle before piping the green mixture — otherwise the mints will be streaked with the pink.

Peanut butter cups

3½ mins

Thawing time: 1½ mins

Standing after thawing: 5-10 mins

25g / 1oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz crunchy peanut butter
90ml / 6tbls digestive or plain sweet biscuit crumbs
65g / 2½oz icing sugar, sifted
225g / 8oz milk chocolate drops

MAKES 24

Microtips

If the chocolate starts to set, remove the bowl from the water and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-60 seconds, or until runny. Stand the bowl in hot water again and continue coating the sweet paper cases.

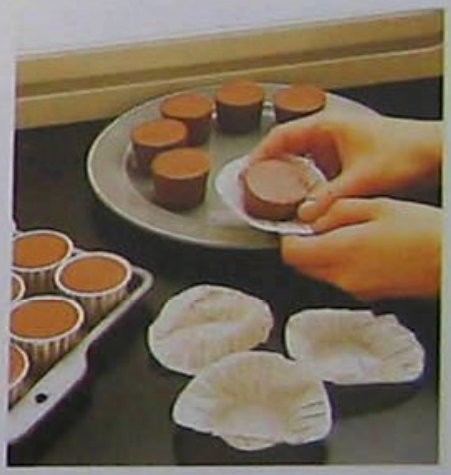
How to microwave Peanut butter cups

Combine *the butter and peanut butter in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-4 minutes, or until butter melts, stirring once or twice. Stir in the crumbs and icing sugar; set aside.*

Melt *the chocolate drops in a bowl at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2½ minutes, stirring once or twice. Stand the bowl in a container of very hot water to prevent the chocolate hardening while using.*

Spoon *5ml / 1tsp chocolate into 24 paper sweet cases and swirl to coat base and sides. (If the chocolate hardens, microwave as directed in Microtips, above.) Leave the cases in a cool place until chocolate sets.*

Press *the peanut butter mixture into each chocolate case. Coat tops with remaining chocolate. Arrange in a single layer on a tray and open-freeze until firm. Wrap, label and freeze for up to 6 months.*



To serve: *arrange 12 of the sweets on a plate in a circle. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1½-2 minutes, rearranging twice; stand for 5-10 minutes. Keep cool until ready to serve. Repeat as required.*

Caramel marshmallows

5 mins

Thawing time: 1 min

Standing after thawing: 5-10 mins

225g / 8oz plain caramels
25g / 1oz margarine
30ml / 2tbls milk
250g / 9oz icing sugar, sifted
175g / 6oz white marshmallows, quartered
150g / 5oz desiccated coconut

MAKES 900g / 2lb

1 Place the caramels, margarine and milk in a bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-6 minutes, or until melted, stirring after 2 minutes, then every minute.
2 Stir in the sugar until completely smooth, then stir in the marshmallows, using as few strokes as possible.
3 Spoon a quarter of the caramel mixture in a strip on a large sheet of non-stick baking parchment. Repeat with remaining three quarters on separate sheets of parchment. Shape each into 12.5cm / 5in rolls, using the paper to help shape them; coat well with coconut.
4 To freeze: wrap in the paper, overwrap, label and seal. Freeze up to 6 months.

Caramel Marshmallows

TO SERVE
Unwrap two rolls, place on a plate, cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-1½ minutes. let stand for 5-10 minutes. Cut into 12mm / ½in slices to serve.

VARIATION
Caramel cherry rolls: stir 100g / 4oz chopped glacé cherries into the caramel together with the marshmallows.

Liqueur truffles

8½ mins

Thawing time: 1 min

Standing after thawing: 10 mins

These truffles make a rich treat with after-dinner coffee.

225g / 8oz cooking chocolate, broken up
90g / 3½oz butter or margarine, cut in pieces
1 egg, beaten
2 egg yolks, beaten
100g / 4oz ground almonds
15ml / 1tbls crème de menthe
15ml / 1tbls cocoa powder, sifted

MAKES 30-40

1 Place the chocolate in a bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-6 minutes, or until melted, stirring two or three times. Stir in the butter until melted. Blend in the egg and egg yolks.
2 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4½-5½ minutes, or until very hot and thickened, stirring with a wire whisk several times. Blend in 65g / 2½oz almonds and the crème de menthe.
3 Chill for 3 hours in the refrigerator, or until mixture, is firm enough to shape, then form into 2.5-4cm / 1-1½in balls.
4 Mix together the remaining almonds and the cocoa. Roll the balls in this mixture to coat.
5 To freeze: open-freeze in a single layer on a tray until firm. Wrap, label and freeze no longer than 6 months.

TO SERVE
Remove 12 truffles from the bag and arrange in a single layer on a plate. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1 minute, rearranging once. Let stand 10 minutes. Place in sweet cases to serve.

VARIATIONS
The liqueurs give these truffles a touch of sophistication. Peppermint is a popular flavour, but try experimenting with others such as orange-flavoured Cointreau.

Nut fudge

17 mins

Thawing time: 2 mins

Standing after thawing: 5-10 mins

300g / 11oz caster sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
175ml / 6fl oz evaporated milk
90g / 3½oz butter or margarine, cut into pieces
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
225g / 8oz milk chocolate drops
175g / 6oz pecans, walnuts or almonds, coarsely chopped

MAKES 900g / 2lb

1 Line a 20 × 12.5cm / 8 × 5in rectangular dish with foil, so that the foil stands above the rim of the dish.
2 In a large heatproof bowl, mix together the sugar, baking powder evaporated milk and butter. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 17-20 minutes, or until the mixture registers 113°C (235°F) on a sugar thermometer and reaches the soft ball stage (see Cook's notes, right). Stir several times during cooking.
3 Add the vanilla flavouring. Beat with an electric mixer at high speed for 2 minutes. Add the chocolate drops and beat with an electric mixer until the drops are completely melted. Stir in the coarsely chopped nuts.
4 Press into prepared dish. Cover and chill until well set. Remove from the dish with the help of the foil lining. Cut the slab in half, then cut each half into serving pieces, but do not separate out.
5 To freeze: wrap separately, label and freeze no longer than 3 months.

TO SERVE
Unwrap one package and separate the pieces on a plate (see Microtips, below). Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2 minutes, rearranging every 30 seconds. Let stand for 5-10 minutes to thaw out completely before serving.

Cook's notes

If you do not have a sugar thermometer, dip a teaspoon in boiling water then drop a spoonful of the mixture into a cup of very cold water — it should form a soft ball, which flattens when removed from the water.

Microtips

If the block does not separate easily into pieces when removed from the freezer, microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1 minute, then separate and microwave a further 1 minute.

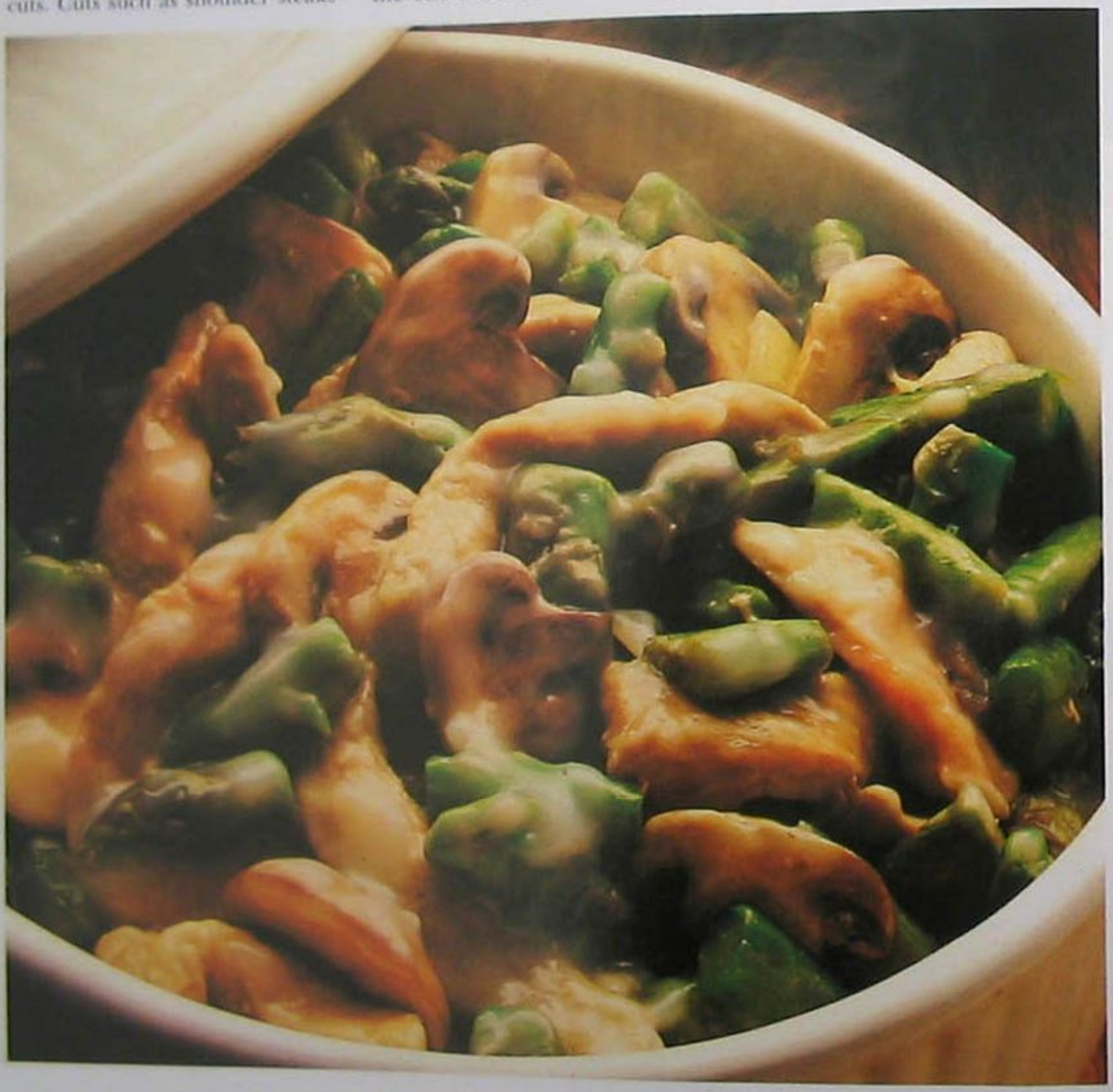
Right: *Liqueur Truffles*
Below: *Nut Fudge*

Pork casseroles

Sliced, diced or cubed, pork makes marvellous casseroles. Combining deliciously with other flavours, it is also quick and easy to microwave. So make the most of pork whenever you need a substantial, tasty meal.

A choice of cuts of fresh pork can be used for casseroling. Prime cuts, such as fillet or tenderloin or boneless loin chops are ideal for the quick and easy recipes. They have a very good flavour and tend to shrink less than the cheaper cuts. Cuts such as shoulder steaks (foreloin in Australia) or leg, casserole well but require a little more cooking, so choose these cuts for recipes with the longer microwaving time.

Cut the meat into strips against the grain when pork slices are required. When dicing, make sure the cubes are neat and of equal size to encourage even cooking. The sauces and vegetables in the recipes add flavour and colour to the meat, so there is no need to use a browning dish or any browning agent. Be sure to stir casseroles two to three times during microwaving, so that the meat cooks evenly and no longer pink.



De luxe pork casserole

10 mins

Standing time: none

1 onion, chopped
350g / 12oz boneless pork, cut into 12mm / ½in strips
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced
340g / 12oz can asparagus, chopped and drained
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice
150ml / ¼pt milk
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried thyme
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place onion in a large casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes until soft.
2 Stir in pork, mushrooms and asparagus. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until pork is no longer pink, stirring twice. Drain off the cooking liquid, reserving 150ml / ¼pt.
3 Blend cornflour and lemon juice in a large jug. Add remaining sauce ingredients with reserved liquid and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until sauce thickens, stirring every minute.
4 Stir the sauce into the pork and vegetables. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute to heat through. Serve immediately.

Left: *De Luxe Pork Casserole*
Above: *Pork and Vegetable Pot*

Pork and vegetable pot

32 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb boneless pork, cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes
½ onion, finely chopped
4 carrots, sliced diagonally
3 celery stalks, sliced diagonally
150ml / ¼pt dry white wine or chicken stock
2 strips pared lemon rind
5ml / 1tsp dried marjoram
1 bay leaf
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic salt
1 green pepper, seeded and sliced
15ml / 1tbls plain flour

SERVES 4

1 Place pork and onion in a large casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring once. Add carrots, celery, wine, lemon rind, herbs and garlic salt. Stir well.
2 Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 23-25 minutes, or until meat and vegetables are tender, stirring three times. Add green pepper for last 5 minutes.
3 Blend the flour with a little cooking liquid. Remove lemon rind and bay leaf, then stir in the flour mixture. Increase power to 100% (High) and microwave for 4 minutes or until bubbling and thickened, stirring every minute. Cover and stand for 5 minutes.
4 Serve with plain boiled rice or noodles, cooked conventionally, and an apple and cabbage salad.

Pork stew

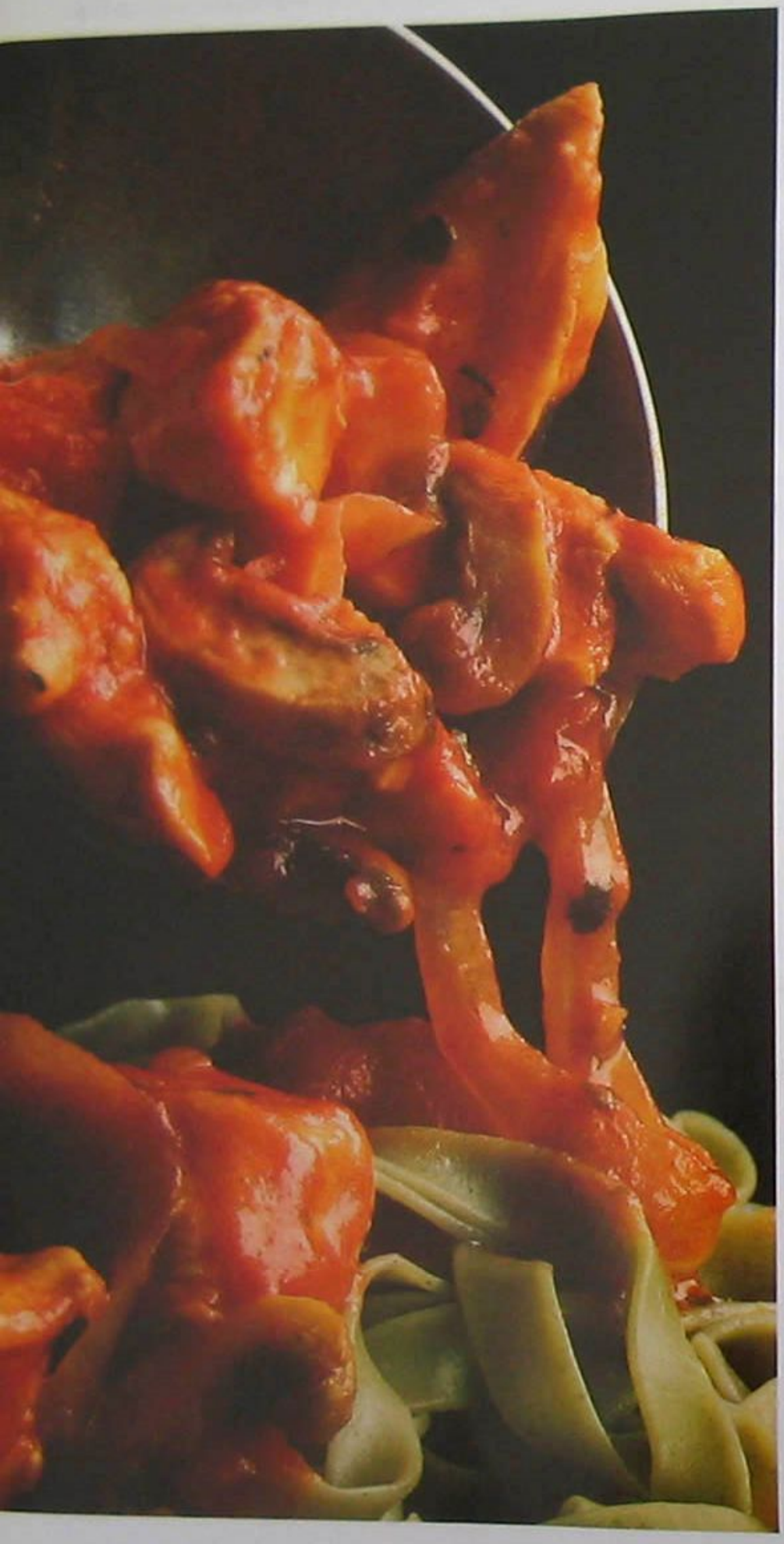
14 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

350g / 12oz boneless pork, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 sweet potato (about 175g / 6oz), cut into 6mm / ¼in cubes
1 carrot, thinly sliced
2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
25g / 1oz butter
1 courgette, cut into 12mm × 5cm / ½ × 2in strips
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried rosemary
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
75ml / 3fl oz white wine

SERVES 4

1 Microwave pork and onion in a large covered casserole at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes until meat is no longer pink; stir twice.
2 Add potato, carrot, celery and butter; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender-crisp, stirring once.
3 Mix in courgette, tomatoes, rosemary, parsley and seasoning, microwave, covered for 2 minutes.
4 Blend flour with wine. Add a few tablespoons of the casserole juices to make a smooth sauce, then stir into casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring every minute. Cover and stand for 5 minutes.



Tomato pork casserole

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Serve this well-flavoured casserole with green tagliatelle, or with hunks of French bread.

100g / 4oz button mushrooms, sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
30ml / 2tbls olive oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
450g / 1lb boneless pork, cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes
400g / 14oz can tomatoes
60ml / 4tbls tomato purée or paste
75ml / 3fl oz dry white wine
1 small bay leaf
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
salt and pepper
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls water

SERVES 4

1 Place mushrooms, onion, oil and garlic in a large casserole. Stir, then cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until onion is tender, stirring once.

2 Stir in pork together with tomatoes, tomato purée, wine, herbs and seasoning. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 13 minutes or until pork is no longer pink, stirring well, two or three times.

3 Blend cornflour with water and stir into casserole. Microwave for a further 3 minutes, until slightly thickened, stirring once. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

Tomato Pork Casserole

Freezer notes

Pork freezes very successfully and Pork Stew can be microwaved and then frozen for up to 3 months. Make up to step 3, turn into microwave freezer dish, cover and freeze. To thaw, cover with vented cling film and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 16-18 minutes, break up and stir every 2 minutes after the first 5 minutes. Follow step 4 to finish recipe.

Mexican pork casserole

15¼ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

8 canned tortillas, or small pancakes

FILLING
1 small onion, chopped
10ml / 2tsp vegetable oil
225g / 8oz boneless pork, cut into 6mm / ¼in cubes
100g / 4oz canned tomatoes
pinch of black pepper
225g / 8oz canned baked beans with chilli
1.5ml / ¼tsp Tabasco sauce

SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter
5ml / 1tsp plain flour
pinch of mustard powder
175ml / 6fl oz milk
salt and pepper

TOPPING
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, mixed red and white if possible, grated
paprika for dusting

SERVES 4

1 Place onion and oil in a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Add pork, tomatoes and season with pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 3-4 minutes, or until pork is no longer pink, stirring twice.
2 Add remaining filling ingredients and microwave for 3 minutes. Stand for 10 minutes.
3 Melt butter at 100% (High) 15-30 seconds, stir in flour and mustard and then blend in milk. Microwave for 3 minutes or until thick, stir three times; season.
4 Assemble and microwave the casserole as shown below.

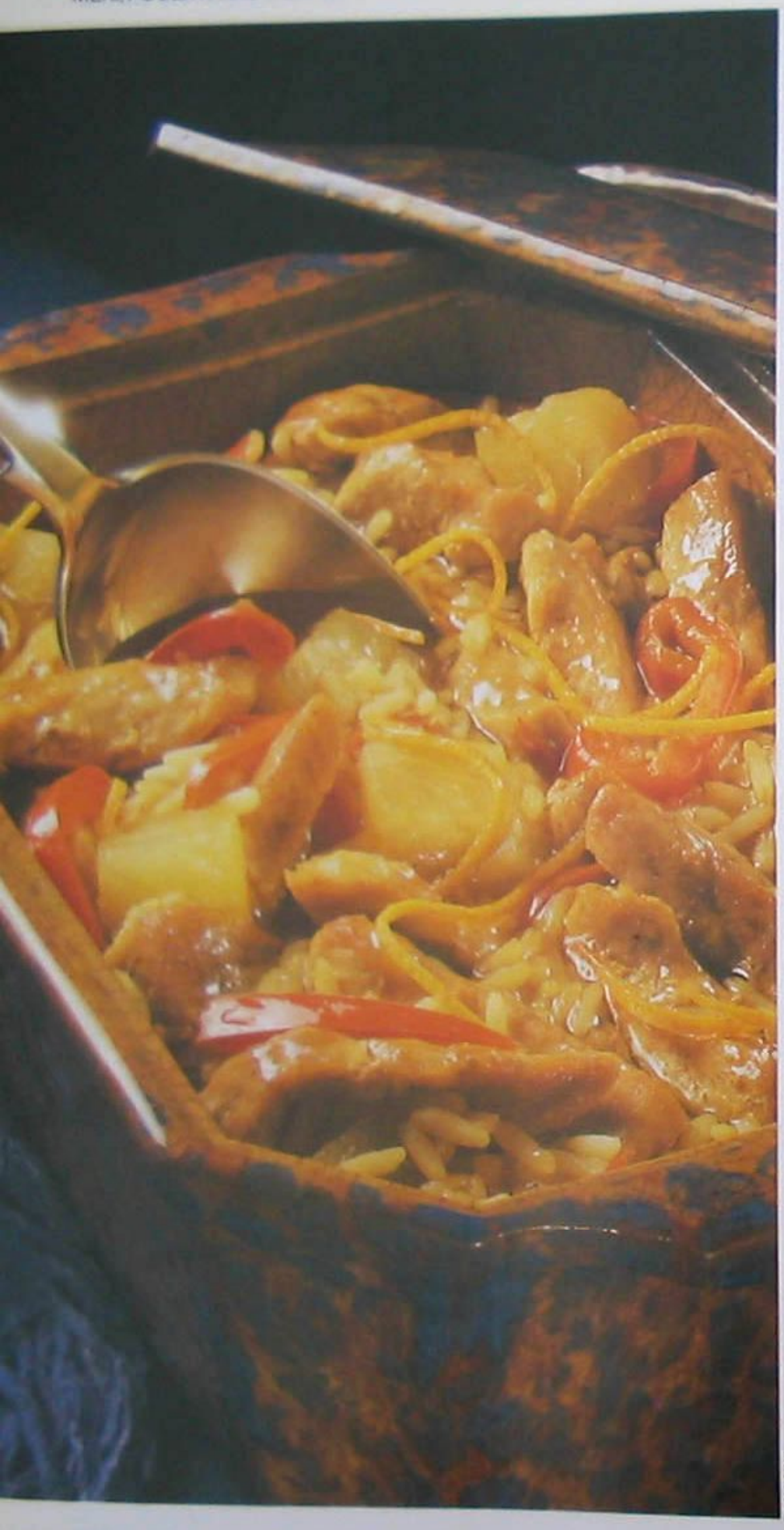
Mexican Pork Casserole

How to assemble Mexican pork casserole

Dip *each tortilla in cold water to soften. Divide the filling equally between the tortillas. Roll up each one and arrange in a row, seam side down, in a large rectangular casserole which takes tortillas in a single layer.*

Pour *the white sauce over the tortillas while still hot, coating them evenly. Spread the sauce to the edges of the tortillas using the back of a spoon, so that the sauce just runs over the edges and covers tortillas completely.*

Sprinkle *the top of the coated tortillas evenly with the grated cheese. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the cheese melts and the sauce is well heated. Dust with paprika and serve hot.*



RAY DUNN

Caribbean casserole

19 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

350g / 12oz boneless pork, cut in 12mm / ½in strips
1 red pepper, seeded and sliced
175g / 6oz long-grain rice
376g / 13.3oz can crushed pineapple
5ml / 1tsp grated orange zest
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
575ml / 1pt boiling water
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Combine pork and pepper strips in a large casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes.

2 Add all the remaining ingredients and stir thoroughly. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 13-15 minutes, or until rice is tender; stir twice. Stand 10 minutes.

Creamy pork casserole

20½ mins

Standing time: none

1 large onion, thinly sliced
450g / 1lb boneless pork, cut in 2.5cm / 1in cubes
1 large cooking apple, peeled, cored and sliced
425ml / 15fl oz strong dry cider
5ml / 1tsp ground allspice
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
75ml / 3fl oz single cream
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Microwave the onion in a covered casserole at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until tender. Add pork, apple, cider and allspice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) 12-14 minutes, stir twice.

2 Blend the flour and cream with enough casserole liquid to make 275ml / ½pt. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, stirring twice. Stir into the casserole and season. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes to heat.

Caribbean Casserole

Citrus fruit 2

Citrus fruits range from familiar mandarins and clementines to exotic newcomers like uglis and sweeties — all share a talent for microwaving. Try their zesty flavour in sweet or savoury dishes.

Citrus fruit does not just stop at oranges, grapefruit, lemons and limes. A multitude of other fruits are available which are just as refreshing. Cooking by microwave helps to release their delicious tangy juices, giving some exciting sweet and savoury results.

After oranges some of the most popular citrus fruits are the loose-skinned oranges — **tangerines, mandarins** and **satsumas** — which are easy to peel. All three have sweet flesh, but tangerines and mandarins contain many pips, whereas satsumas are seedless. Mandarin orange segments are also available canned in light sugar syrup. The tiny **clementine** is a cross between a tangerine and an orange and contains few pips. Baby clementines, about the size of a walnut, are sometimes available.

More unusual citrus fruits include the **ugli** and **ortanique.** The ugli is a cross between a tangerine and a grapefruit, with an irregular shape and yellow green, loose-fitting, knobbly skin. The ortanique is a cross between an orange and a mandarin with thin, smooth yellow-orange skin and sweet juicy flesh. The **pomelo** is the largest of all citrus fruits — a giant grapefruit-type fruit with thick, pithy skin and crisp, sweet flesh. The **sweetie** fruit (or sweet green grapefruit) is a modern fruit — a cross between the grapefruit and the pomelo.

Kumquats resemble minature oranges but are oval in shape. The whole fruit is eaten and has a tart, bitter-sweet flavour.

Choosing and storing fruit

Select fruit with bright, slightly moist skins and no bruising or wrinkles. Store in a cool place (but not the refrigerator, except in very hot weather) for up to a week.

Citrus Punnets

ANDREW WHITTUCK

Citrus punnets

5 mins

Standing time: none

2 large grapefruit
8 green grapes, halved and seeded
8 black grapes, halved and seeded
50-100g / 2-4oz fresh, frozen or drained, canned raspberries
mint leaves, to decorate
caster sugar, to serve (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Prepare the punnets as directed in the steps below.
2 Combine the grapefruit segments with the other fruit; use to fill the grapefruit shells. Pull the strips of rind together over the top and fasten with cocktail sticks.
3 Arrange the punnets on a plate. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5-6 minutes until warmed, rotating half a turn once. Decorate with the mint leaves and serve with caster sugar, if liked.

How to prepare citrus punnets

Halve *the grapefruit, remove the segments carefully and hollow out the shells. Reserve segments.*

Cut *a 6mm / ¼in strip around top edge of fruit shell, leaving 2.5cm / 1in of rind on each side to make handles.*

Citrus Ham Steaks

Microtips

Make up as many grapefruit punnets as liked, using a grapefruit knife to cut out the segments to leave them whole. To serve warm, microwave on a plate, allowing 1½-2 minutes per punnet.

Citrus ham steaks

7 mins

Standing time: none

Cut the satsuma slices into attractive shapes to garnish, if liked

3 satsumas
15ml / 1tbls brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
2.5ml / ½tsp cornflour
4 tender-sweet ham steaks

SERVES 4

1 Grate the zest from one satsuma and squeeze the juice in a measuring jug; add the zest.
2 Cut two thick slices from the centres of the remaining satsumas, then squeeze the juice from the ends and add to the measuring jug. Make up to 150ml / ¼pt with water. Stir in the sugar and ground ginger. Blend the cornflour with a little of the juice mixture, then pour back into the jug, stirring until well blended.
3 Pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Place the ham steaks in the dish, pour some sauce over each steak and turn them over, pressing down. Pour over the remaining citrus sauce.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, then turn the steaks over and add the slices of satsuma. Continue microwaving for 1-1½ minutes, or until the satsuma slices are hot. Serve immediately with buttered green beans and creamed potatoes, if liked.

Citrus fruit salad

4 mins

Standing time: none

If available, try using baby clementines in this fruit salad in place of the kumquats. They give an equally attractive result and are deliciously sweet.

zest and juice of 1 orange
275g / 10oz sugar
275ml / ½pt water
1 large pomelo, peeled, seeded and segmented
3 clementines, peeled, seeded and segmented
50g / 2oz kumquats, sliced
1 ugli or sweetie fruit, peeled, seeded and segmented

SERVES 10

1 Place the orange zest and juice in a large bowl and add the sugar and half the water. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes, or until the sugar has dissolved, stirring well twice.
2 Add the remaining water and all the prepared fruit. Serve immediately while hot, or cool completely and serve chilled.

VARIATION
Boozy citrus fruit salad: just before serving, stir in 45ml / 3tbls Cointreau or Grand Marnier.

Tangy baked beans

8 mins

Standing time: none

Turn baked beans into a special dish for hungry youngsters or to serve at teenage parties. Ladle the beans into bowls and serve with hunks of bread.

1 onion, chopped
4 celery stalks, sliced
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
840g / 1.85lb can baked beans
30ml / 2tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
30ml / 2tbls frozen concentrated orange juice, thawed
5ml / 1tsp made English mustard
298g / 10½oz can mandarin oranges, drained, or 4 fresh mandarin oranges, peeled and segmented

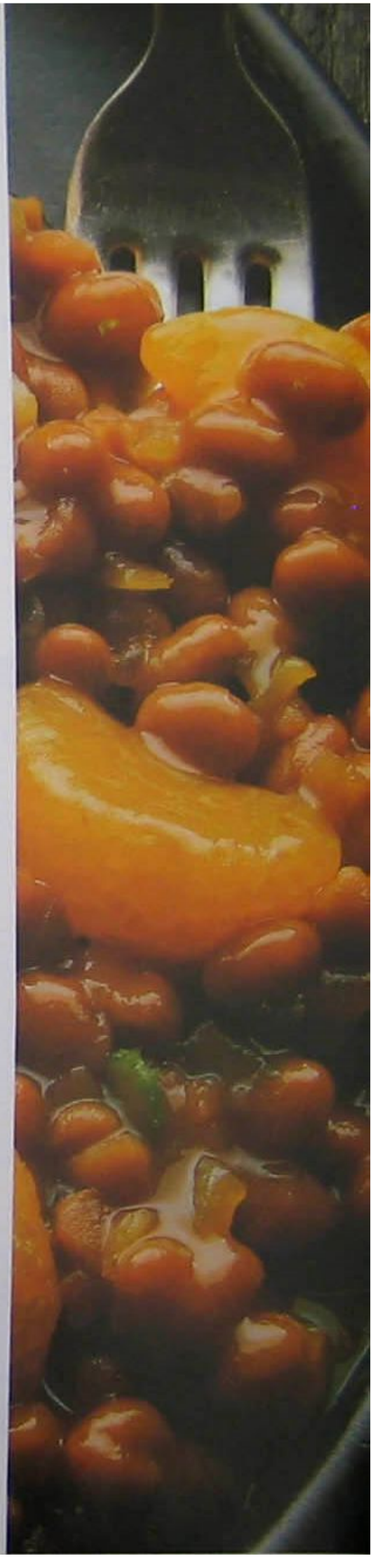
SERVES 6

1 In a large casserole, combine the onion, celery and butter. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until tender-crisp.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients, except the mandarin oranges. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once. Stir in the oranges and microwave a further 2-3 minutes, or until thoroughly heated.

Tangy Baked Beans

Cook's notes

Fresh clementine leaves make an excellent garnish. Use to line the fruit bowl, or lay them on a serving platter as a 'bed' for stuffed oranges or hot grapefruit.



Apricot orange cobbler

10 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

100g / 4oz self-raising flour, sifted
pinch of salt
50g / 2oz shredded suet or cooking margarine
50g / 2oz caster sugar
1 egg, beaten
397g / 14oz can apricot pie filling*
298g / 10½oz can mandarin oranges, drained
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon

SERVES 6

1 Mix together the flour, salt, suet and half the sugar in a bowl. Add the egg, gather the mixture together and form into a long roll. Break into six portions.
2 Combine the pie filling and mandarin oranges in a wide dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-4½ minutes, or until the mixture is hot, stirring once.
3 Drop the pieces of dough around the outside of the dish. Sprinkle with the remaining sugar mixed with the cinnamon. Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-6½ minutes, rotating dish half a turn once. Allow to stand for 2 minutes. Serve hot.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use 425g / 15oz can apricot halves, drained and mashed.

Sweetie sorbet

2 mins

Standing time: none

The sweetie makes a deliciously refreshing sorbet. Garnish with mint sprigs, if liked.

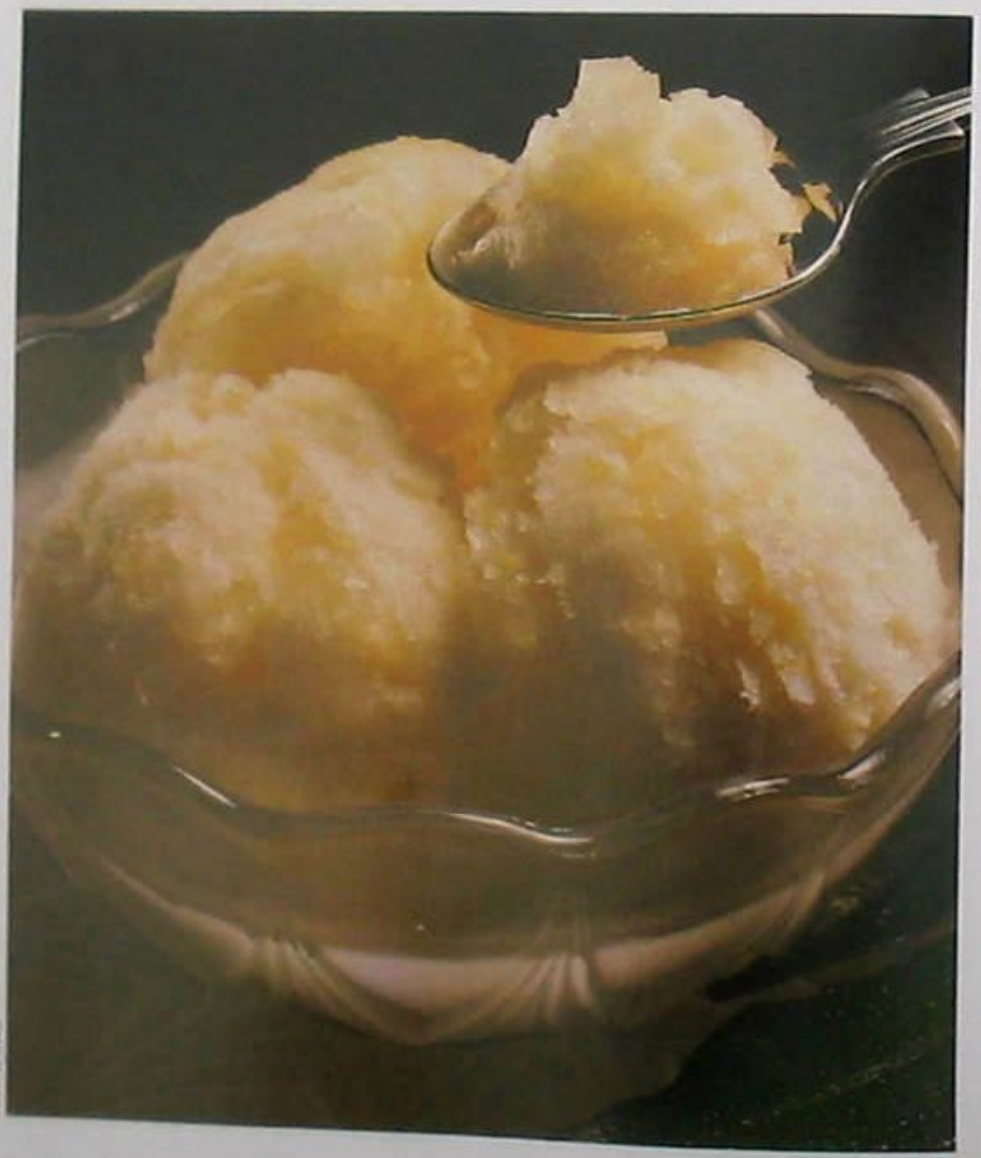
2 sweetie fruit (sweet green grapefruit)
75g / 3oz sugar
1 egg white

SERVES 6

1 Grate the zest from one sweetie and squeeze the juice from both. Place the zest and juice in a measuring jug; it should make about 275ml / ½pt. Add the sugar and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until the sugar is dissolved, stirring once; cool.
2 Pour into a freezer container. Open-freeze for 2-4 hours, stirring once. Turn into a chilled large bowl and whisk until smooth, or use a food processor for really smooth results.
3 Using clean beaters, whisk the egg white until standing in soft peaks. Fold into the half frozen mixture. Return to the freezer container, cover and freeze for at least 4 hours until firm.
4 To serve, microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 2 minutes to soften, or remove from the freezer and allow to soften in the refrigerator for 20 minutes just before serving.

VARIATION
The sweetie has a mild, sweet flavour. If preferred, use one sweetie and make up rest of juice using grapefruit or unsweetened grapefruit juice for a sharper taste; omit the zest.

Below left: *Apricot Orange Cobbler*
Below: *Sweetie Sorbet*



RAY DUNS

Tangerine sauce

2 mins

Standing time: none

This sauce is delicious and refreshingly tangy; serve it over steamed sponge puddings, or spicy cake. Substitute clementines or satsumas, if preferred.

30ml / 2tbls sugar
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls coarsely grated tangerine zest
150ml / ¼pt tangerine juice
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
45ml / 3tbls water
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice

MAKES 275ml / ½pt

1 In a measuring jug, combine the sugar and cornflour. Blend in a little of the tangerine juice to make a smooth paste, then add the remainder together with the zest. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until thickened, stirring after each minute.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients, one at a time.

Chicken with kumquats

13 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

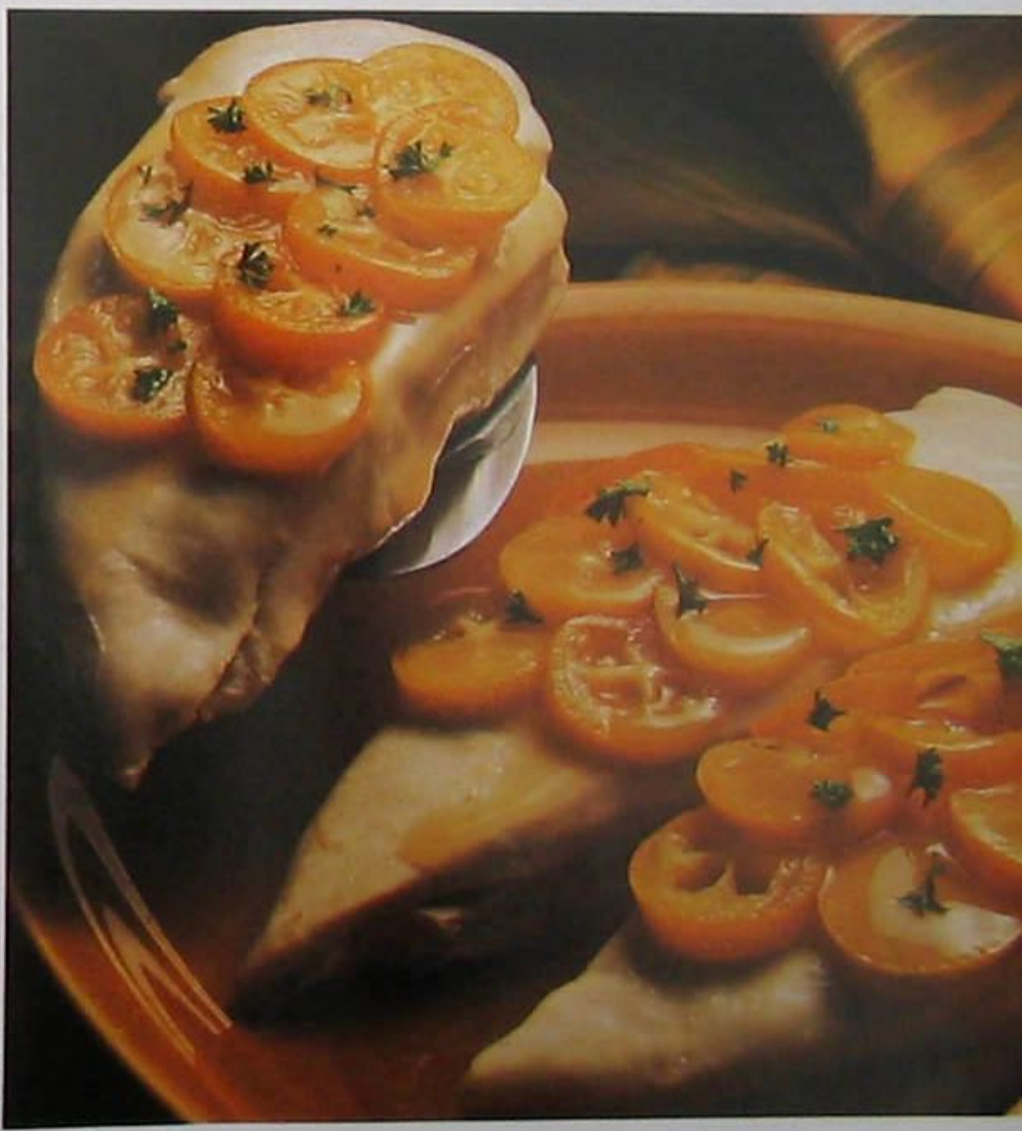
100g / 4oz kumquats, sliced thinly, pips and ends discarded
15ml / 1tbls light soy sauce
45ml / 3tbls water
dash of Tabasco sauce
1 garlic clove, crushed
pepper, to taste
4 boneless chicken breasts (each weighing about 225g / 8oz), skinned
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
10ml / 2tsp cornflour

SERVES 4

1 Combine all ingredients except chicken, parsley and cornflour in a jug. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes until hot. Pour over the chicken breasts in a roasting bag. Leave to cool and marinate for 2 hours, turning chicken after 1 hour; or leave in the refrigerator overnight.
2 Lift the chicken breasts out of the marinade and arrange in a baking dish. Pour over the marinade, reserving the kumquat slices. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-11 minutes, or until the meat is tender, turning over and basting after 5 minutes. Add the kumquat slices for the last minute, arranging them over chicken with the parsley. Stand 2 minutes.
3 Strain the juices into a jug. Mix in cornflour and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes. Serve with chicken.

Slimmer's notes

This makes a really healthy, slimming main course. Each portion provides just 288 Cal / 1210kJ.



RAY DUNS

Above: *Tangerine Sauce*
Right: *Chicken with Kumquats*

Microwave plus mincer and mill

There's nothing to beat the aroma of freshly-ground coffee or the succulence of home-minced beef — so use your mincer and mill, together with the microwave, to make light work of countless meals.

The appetizing appearance of home-minced lean beef or the tempting aroma of freshly ground coffee are evidence enough of the usefulness of the mincer and mill.

Mincers

Manual mincers, designed to be attached to the work surface, usually have a cast iron framework although they are also made in plastic. They have a choice of blades which can be fitted to give a coarse or fine-textured mince. The food is dropped into the funnel and the crank handle turned to force the food through the blades and produce the mince. Manual mincers can be fiddly to assemble and clean, but they do take very small quantities and any combination of ingredients.

Most food processors have a metal blade for mincing. These are fast and efficient, their drawback is not being built to deal with small quantities. When using a food processor, mince in short bursts: do not overwork or the food will become mushy.

Preparing food for mincing: trim meat of fat and gristle and cut into strips or cubes. Skin fish and cut into strips or cubes. Minced meat does not stay fresh for very long, so use immediately.

Mills

Manual and electric mills are available. Manual mills are usually made from cast iron and can be adjusted for the degree of fineness and coarseness you require. Electric mills come either as self-contained models or as attachments to blenders.

This equipment is particularly popular for grinding coffee beans to make fresh coffee, but can also be used for spices, breadcrumbs,

Layered Smoked Haddock Mousse

nuts and for grinding down sugar or rice. There is no doubt that grinding whole spices gives the best results, but it is perhaps best to keep a mill for this purpose to avoid flavour clashes. However, for occasional grinding of spices the mill can be brushed out after use with a small pastry brush and then rinsed in clear water. Alternatively there are specific spice mills, similar to a manual mincer; or use a pepper mill or pestle and mortar.

Grind dry ingredients in short bursts, using only as much as you will need at the time.

Layered smoked haddock mousse

5½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

If you do not have a ring mould, use a round dish and place an upturned glass in the centre. Remember to grease the glass where it will come in contact with the mousse, then remove the glass before turning out the mousse.

450g / 1lb smoked haddock fillets
60ml / 4tbls mayonnaise
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
pepper
15ml / 3tsp powdered gelatine
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
150ml / ¼pt double cream
4 hard-boiled eggs, shelled and sliced
60ml / 4tbls chopped parsley or watercress

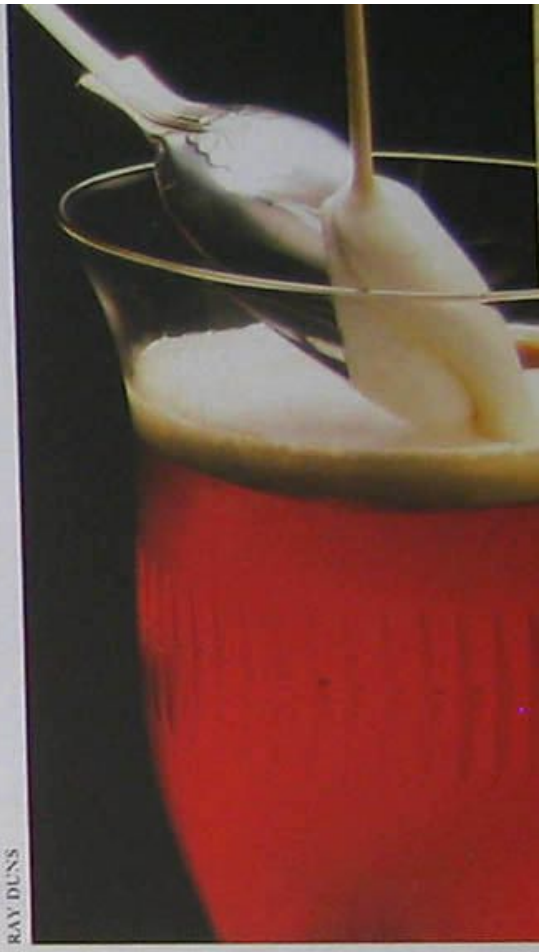
SERVES 6-8

1 Cut the smoked haddock into several pieces, lay in a shallow dish with the thickest parts to the outside of the dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then remove and discard skin and bones. Mince the cooked fish as finely as possible in a hand mincer or food processor.
2 Put the mayonnaise in a large bowl and stir in the minced fish, Worcesteshire sauce and pepper.
3 Sprinkle the gelatine over the lemon juice in a small bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds or until hot, but not boiling. Stir after 20 seconds and again at the end to make sure the gelatine dissolves. Cool slightly, then stir into the fish mixture.
4 Whisk the cream until it holds its shape, then fold into the fish.
5 Brush a 900ml / 1½pt capacity ring mould lightly with oil. Spoon about one-third of the fish mixture into the mould and smooth with the back of the spoon. Cover with a layer of sliced hard-boiled egg and sprinkle over half the chopped parsley or watercress.
6 Spoon half the remaining fish mixture on top and cover with the remaining slices of egg and parsley or watercress. Cover with the remaining fish mixture and smooth the top. Cover and chill for at least 1 hour or overnight, until set.
7 To serve, carefully loosen the mousse from the sides and centre of the mould, by running a knife around the edge, then turn out on to a serving plate. Sieve the yolk of a hard-boiled egg to garnish.

How to microwave fresh coffee

Grind *fresh, roasted coffee beans. Place a generous 30ml / 2tbls measure of coffee in a heatproof jug. Add 575ml / 1pt of cold water; stir well.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes until very hot, but not boiling. Stir well. Cover and leave to infuse for 4-5 minutes. Strain and serve.*



RAY DUNN

Boozy coffee

4 mins

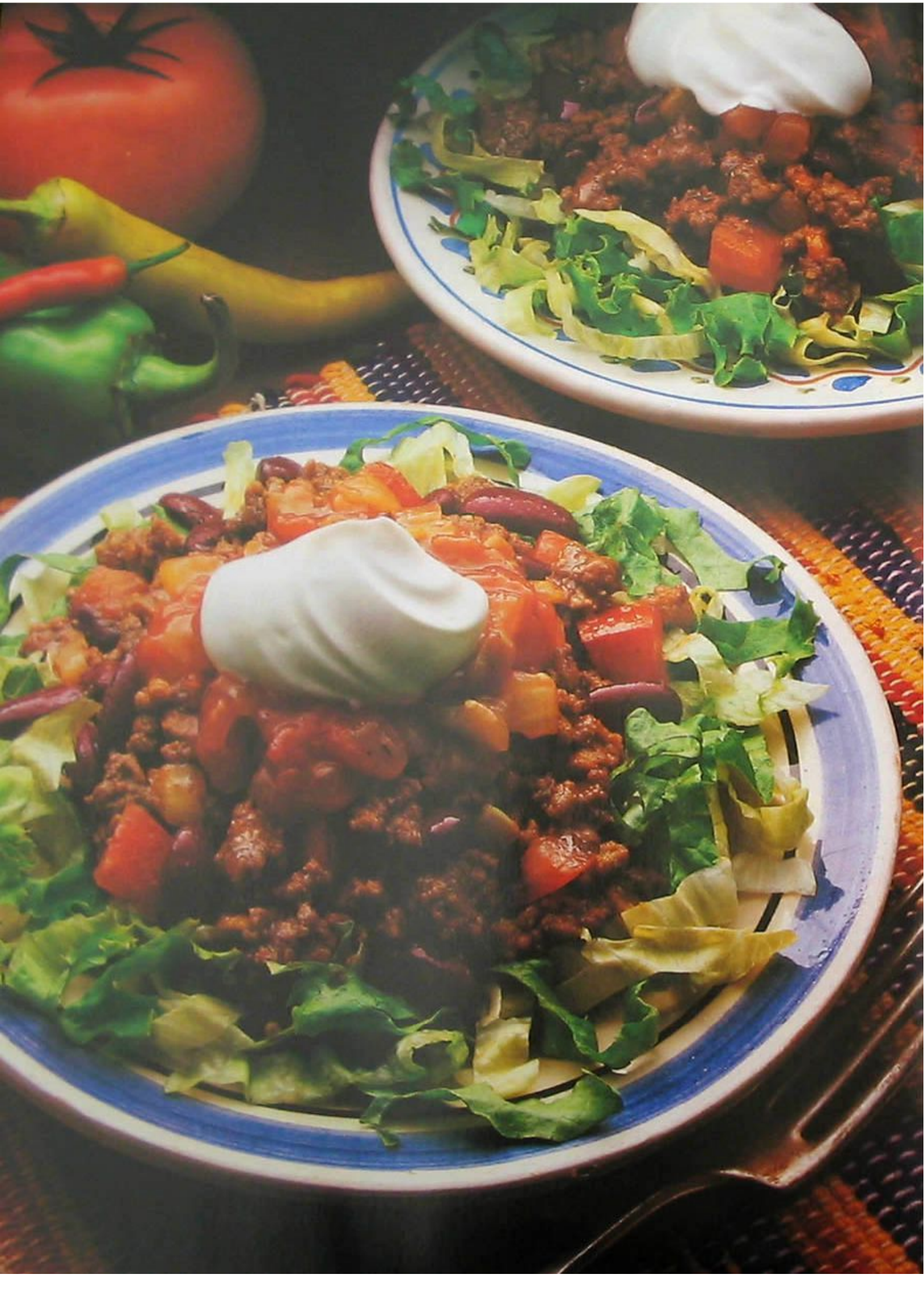
Standing time: none

120ml / 8tbls alcohol (see Variations, below)
120ml / 8tbls demerara sugar, or to taste
575ml / 1pt cold black coffee
double cream, lightly whipped until thick but pourable

SERVES 4

1 Divide the alcohol, sugar and coffee equally between four stemmed, heatproof glasses. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until very hot but not boiling.
2 Stir to dissolve the sugar. Carefully pour a little cream over the back of a small metal spoon into each glass.

VARIATIONS
Russian coffee: use vodka.
Caribbean coffee: use rum.
Mexican coffee: use Tia Maria or another coffee-flavoured liqueur.
Spicy citrus coffee: use orange liqueur, with a pinch of ground cloves and cinnamon.



Tex-mex salad

4½ mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz lean beef (fillet, rump or sirloin)
1 small onion, chopped
2 dried chillies or 1 fresh chilli, seeds removed, ground
10ml / 2tsp cumin seeds, ground
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried oregano
440g / 15½oz can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1 tomato, seeded and chopped
1 small lettuce, shredded
4 spring onions, trimmed and chopped
5ml / 1tsp butter
10ml / 2tsp coriander seeds, ground
120ml / 8tbls tomato chutney or pickle
soured cream, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Trim the meat of any fat or gristle, cut into 2.5cm / 1in cubes and mince finely in a hand mincer or food processor.
2 In a bowl, mix together the minced beef, onion, chillies, cumin and oregano. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes or until the beef is no longer pink, stirring once.
3 Drain, then stir in the kidney beans and tomato.
4 Divide the lettuce between four serving plates. Top each with a quarter of the beef mixture.
5 Place the spring onions, butter and ground coriander seeds in a small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, uncovered. Stir in the tomato chutney and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 1 minute. Spoon 30ml / 2tbls of the tomato mixture over each serving and top with soured cream.

Tex-mex Salad for two: halve all the ingredients, using a 200g / 7½oz can of kidney beans. Microwave the beef, onion, chilli, cumin and oregano at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Microwave onion, butter and coriander for 40 seconds, add the chutney and microwave for another 40 seconds.

Herby fish burgers

31 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb floury potatoes, diced
60ml / 4tbls water
450g / 1lb cod or haddock fillets
25g / 1oz butter
1 beaten egg
5ml / 1tsp dried dillweed
5ml / 1tsp dried thyme
salt and pepper
90ml / 6tbls dry brown breadcrumbs

SERVES 4

1 Place the potatoes and water in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-11 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender, stirring once. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then drain and mash.
2 Skin the fish and mince as finely as possible in a hand mincer or food processor. Place the fish in a second bowl; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring after 3 minutes and at the end of cooking. Drain if necessary.
3 Beat the mashed potato into the cooked fish and add the butter, beaten egg and herbs; season.
4 Divide the fish mixture into eight and shape into round flat cakes. Spread the breadcrumbs on a plate and turn the fish burgers in the crumbs until well coated.
5 Heat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High), or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Arrange four of the burgers in the dish, and press down well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, turning the fish burgers over once. Reheat the browning dish and repeat with the remaining burgers. Serve each batch as they are cooked.

Herby Fish Burgers

Cook's notes

Cut the fish into strips that will fit easily into the mincer. Place a bowl under the outlet. Feed the fish into the mincer and turn the handle to process.

RAY DUNS

Chicken saté

6 mins

Standing time: 6 mins

Grinding the spices yourself makes this Indonesian speciality taste wonderfully authentic. Serve the kebabs garnished with diced cucumber and creamed coconut, if liked. Peanut sauce is the traditional accompaniment.

450g / 1lb boneless chicken breasts, skinned and cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
Peanut Sauce, to serve

MARINADE
10ml / 2tsp cumin seeds
10ml / 2tsp coriander seeds
1 garlic clove
2.5cm / 1in piece ginger root, peeled
15ml / 1tbls demerara sugar
juice of ½ lemon or 1 lime
30ml / 2tbls dark soy sauce
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Thread the diced chicken on to 16 wooden skewers. Place in a shallow dish in a single layer.
2 Briefly grind the cumin and coriander seeds together, place in a bowl and brush out the mill. Grind the garlic and ginger together and add to the seeds. Stir in the remaining marinade ingredients. Spoon over the chicken, cover and leave in a cool place for several hours, turning the skewers over two or three times.
3 Drain eight of the chicken satés and place in a single layer on a roasting rack. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, rearranging and turning the skewers over after 2 minutes. Stand, covered, for 3 minutes. Repeat with the remaining satés.
4 Serve the satés with the peanut sauce, dipping the skewers into the sauce.

VARIATION
To make beef saté, use 450g / 1lb rump steak. Trim and cut into 12mm /½in cubes. Thread on to skewers and marinate for the same time as the Chicken Satés. Microwave in two batches at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, turning the skewers over once. Stand for 3 minutes.

Peanut sauce

8 mins

Standing time: none

100g / 4oz unsalted peanuts
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
15ml / 1tbls demerara sugar
juice of ½ lemon or 1 lime
30ml / 2tbls dark soy sauce
25g / 1oz creamed coconut, grated
225ml / 8fl oz water

SERVES 4

1 Finely grind the peanuts. Place the onion, garlic and oil in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, stirring after 1 minute, then every 2 minutes, until thick. If the sauce becomes too thick, blend in a little more water. Spoon into four small bowls. Serve with Chicken Saté.

Chicken Saté with Peanut Sauce

Quick-mix cakes

Use the easy all-in-one method for mixing cakes instead of creaming or rubbing in to make microwaving cakes for a crowd or a family tea speedier than ever.

If you're going to cook quickly, why spend time over laborious mixing? Beat everything together in one easy stage.

To make the mixing easier, all the ingredients should be in a 'mixable' condition. If you are using butter or margarine straight from the refrigerator, soften it by microwaving at 30% (Low) for 10 seconds per 100g / 4oz. This will make it easy to beat and, therefore, ideal for all-in-one cakes. For mixing, use an electric mixer or beat by hand with a wooden spoon. In either case, take care not to overbeat — the mixture should be just evenly blended — otherwise the cake will be tough and heavy. If using an electric mixer, add ingredients such as chopped dates or raisins after the main mixing, and beat them in using a wooden spoon to avoid their being broken up between the mixer blades.

These recipes produce 'slab' cakes — not loaves. This form is more suited to the texture of the mixture and to microwave cooking. The mixtures are generally moister than for conventional cooking; if using a see-through container, a reliable way to check if the cakes are cooked is to look through the base of the dish and stop cooking when no moist, uncooked patches are visible.

Wait until cakes are cool to add the frosting. This is best done while the cake is still in its dish, from which it can be served.

Rose marble cake

11 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Distilled rose water is available from Asian food stores, health-food shops and delicatessens.

225g / 8oz self-raising flour
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
225g / 8oz butter or margarine, softened
175g / 6oz caster sugar
4 eggs, beaten
60ml / 4tbls water
10ml / 2tsp rose water
few drops of pink food colouring
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
60ml / 4tbls jam

ANDREW WHITTUCK

ICING:
350g / 12oz icing sugar, sifted
5ml / 1tsp rose water
water to mix
2 drops of pink food colouring

SERVES 12

1 Lightly grease a 2.5L / 4½pt ring dish. Sift the flour and baking powder and add the butter, sugar, eggs, water and rose water.
2 Beat using an electric mixer at medium speed for 2 minutes, or by hand for 3 minutes.
3 Divide mixture in half. Beat the colouring into one part and vanilla into the other.
4 Drop alternate spoonfuls of the mixtures into the dish. Draw a knife around once in each direction to marble the mixtures.
5 Place on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 11-12 minutes, or until just firm to the touch, turning once.
6 Stand in the dish for 5 minutes, then turn out on to a wire rack to cool. Split horizontally and fill with the jam when cold.
7 Sift the icing sugar; add the rose water and cold water to make a coating consistency. Reserve 45ml / 3tbls and colour it pink. Pour the plain icing over the cake. Leave to set, then pipe pink icing in a zig-zag pattern over the top.

Gingerbread squares

14 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

175g / 6oz plain flour
pinch of salt
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon
7.5ml / 1½tsp ground ginger
75g / 3oz margarine or butter
60ml / 4tbls soft brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls golden syrup
30ml / 2tbls black treacle
1 egg, beaten
30ml / 2tbls milk

MAKES 16 PIECES

1 Lightly grease a 20cm / 8in square dish. Sift the flour with the salt, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, cinnamon and ginger. Make a well in the centre.
2 Place the margarine, sugar, syrup and treacle in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3 minutes until melted and hot.
3 Pour the hot liquid into the dry ingredients, with the egg and milk. Beat until smooth.
4 Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared dish and shield the edges with small, smooth pieces of foil. Place the dish on an inverted saucer and microwave at 30% (Low) for 10-12 minutes, or until still slightly moist but almost set in the centre. Give a quarter turn every 2-3 minutes.
5 Remove the foil and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Leave to stand 5 minutes; then turn out and cool on a wire rack.

Quick ginger bars

13½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

100g / 4oz plain flour
100g / 4oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
5ml / 1tsp ground ginger
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
2.5ml / ½tsp grated nutmeg
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cloves
175g / 6oz margarine, softened
175g / 6oz soft brown sugar
3 eggs, beaten
45ml / 3tbls milk
frosting (see Part 35, pages 964-7)

MAKES 12-14

1 Lightly grease a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in rectangular dish. Sift the flours with the salt, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves.
2 Add margarine, sugar, eggs and milk and beat, using an electric mixer at medium speed for 1-2 minutes, or by hand for 2-3 minutes.

Gingerbread Squares

3 Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared dish. Shield the corners with small, smooth pieces of foil. Place on an inverted saucer and microwave at 30% (Low) for 12-14 minutes, giving a quarter turn every 3-4 minutes.
4 Remove the foil and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes to finish the cooking. The cake should feel just springy to the touch in the centre. Stand for 5 minutes, then cool in the dish on a wire rack. Top the cooled cake with the frosting of your choice.

Nifty almond slices

14 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

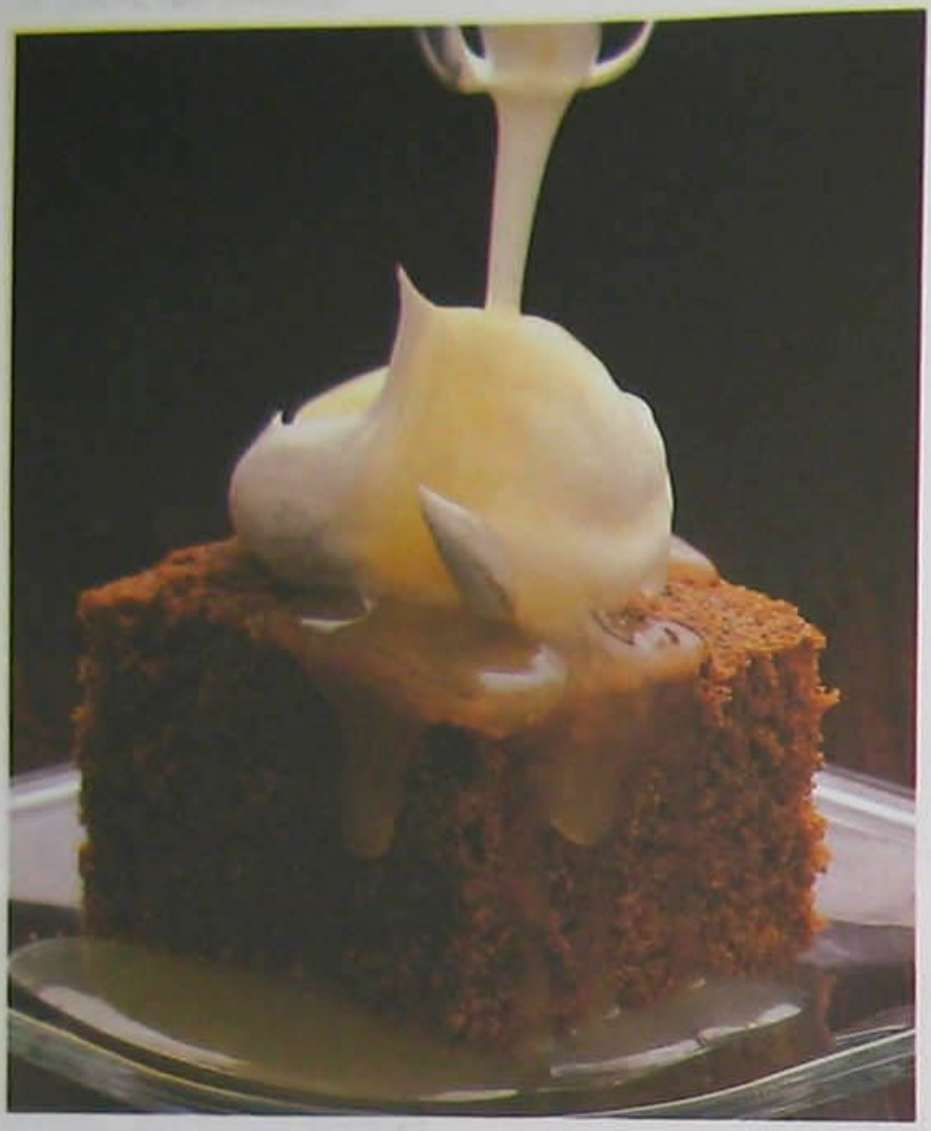
200g / 7oz plain flour
60ml / 12tsp cornflour
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
100g / 4oz butter or margarine, softened
100g / 4oz caster sugar
2 eggs, beaten
30ml / 2tbls milk
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
100g / 4oz pressed dates, chopped
50g / 2oz blanched almonds, chopped

Above: *Quick Ginger Bars*
Right: *Nifty Almond Slices*

150ml / ¼pt soured cream frosting (see Part 35, pages 964-7)

MAKES ABOUT 12 PIECES

1 Lightly grease a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in rectangular dish. Sift the flour, cornflour and baking powder together several times.
2 Add the butter, sugar, eggs, milk and vanilla and beat using an electric mixer at medium speed for 1 minute, or by hand for 2 minutes. When smooth, stir in the dates, almonds and soured cream.
3 Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared dish. Shield the corners with small, smooth pieces of well-secured foil.
4 Place on an inverted saucer and microwave at 30% (Low) for 13-14 minutes, giving a quarter turn every 2-3 minutes. Remove the foil; microwave at 100% (High) for a further 1-2 minutes, or until no moist patches are visible through the base of the dish.
5 Stand to complete cooking for 5 minutes, then cool completely. Top with the frosting of your choice. Cut into 12 pieces.



Speedy spiced squares

12½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz plain flour
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
pinch of bicarbonate of soda
5ml / 1tsp ground mixed spice or cinnamon
75g / 3oz margarine
60ml / 4tbls dark soft brown sugar or muscovado
15ml / 1tbls runny honey
22½ml / 1½tbls black treacle
3 eggs
grated zest of 1 small lemon
45ml / 3tbls milk

SERVES 6-8

1 Grease an 18cm / 7in square or 20cm / 8in round cake dish and line the base with greased greaseproof paper.

2 Sift the flour, salt, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and spice into a bowl and make a well in the centre.

3 Place the margarine, sugar, honey and treacle in a bowl, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for about 2½-3 minutes, or until melted. Add the eggs, lemon zest, and the melted mixture to the flour and beat using an electric mixer at medium speed for 2 minutes, or by hand using a wooden spoon for 3 minutes.

4 Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared dish and place on an inverted saucer. Microwave at 30% (Low) for 9-10 minutes, then at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until just springy to the touch in the centre. Give the dish a quarter turn every 2-3 minutes.

5 Stand for 5 minutes, then turn out and cool on a wire rack. Serve warm with whipped cream or a hot jam or lemon sauce.

Date and nut cake

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

350g / 12oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
pinch of salt
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
75g / 3oz butter or margarine, softened
75g / 3oz soft brown sugar
3 eggs, beaten
150ml / ¼pt milk
100g / 4oz pressed dates, chopped
50g / 2oz blanched almonds, chopped
Orange or Lemon Frosting (see recipe Part 35, page 967)

MAKES 10-12 PIECES

1 Lightly grease a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in rectangular dish. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon into a bowl. Add the butter, sugar, eggs and milk and beat, using an electric mixer for 1-2 minutes or by hand for 2-3 minutes, to produce a soft dropping consistency. Stir in the dates and almonds.

Left: *Speedy Spiced Square*
Below: *Date and Nut Cake*

2 Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared dish and shield the corners with small, smooth pieces of foil.
3 Stand on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes, turning occasionally, until quite springy to the touch and no longer damp on top. Stand for 5 minutes. Transfer the dish to a wire rack and cool.
4 Frost the top of the cold cake and serve from the dish.

Banana nut cake

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
pinch of bicarbonate of soda
100g / 4oz butter or margarine, softened
2 ripe bananas
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
100g / 4oz caster sugar
75g / 3oz walnuts, chopped
1 egg, beaten
15ml / 1tbls milk

ICING
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls single cream
175g / 6oz icing sugar, sifted
10ml / 2tsp maple or golden syrup

MAKES 15 PIECES

1 Lightly grease a 25 × 15cm / 10 × 6in rectangular dish. Sift the flour with the salt, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda several times to mix evenly.
2 Add all the remaining cake ingredients and beat using an electric mixer at medium speed for 2 minutes, or by hand for 3 minutes, until smooth and light.
3 Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared dish and shield the corners with small pieces of smooth foil. Place on an inverted saucer and make sure that the foil cannot touch the sides of the cooker.
4 Microwave at 30% (Low) for 17-19 minutes, giving the dish a quarter turn twice during cooking. Remove the foil and increase the power to 100% (High). Microwave for a further 2-3 minutes, or until no uncooked mixture is visible through the base of the dish, or the cake is just springy to the touch.
5 Stand for 5 minutes to complete cooking. Leave to cool.
6 To make the icing, place the butter and cream in a bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 60-80 seconds, or until bubbling. Stir in the sugar and syrup and mix until smooth. Spread evenly over the cooled cake. Cut into 15 pieces and serve from the dish.

Microtips

When cooking in square or rectangular dishes, shield the corners with small, smooth pieces of foil. Stand the dish on an inverted saucer so that microwave energy can reach the base, making sure that the foil cannot touch the sides of the cooker.

Banana Nut Cake

Posh prawns

When you need to dish up a stylish starter or main course at short notice, prawns are perfect. Slightly sweet-tasting and succulent, prawns are always popular and bring a touch of class to any meal.

Prawns are a special treat. They look impressive whole with a simple sauce as a starter or canapé, or can be combined with other seafood or vegetables for last-minute entertaining or family occasions.

Prawns come in many varieties and sizes, from tiny, delicate morsels to the succulent king-size prawns. Frozen or canned prawns are convenient store-cupboard standbys for surprise visitors. Frozen prawns can be thawed in the microwave for speed. (See Part 7, page 191.)

Fresh-cooked prawns are readily available and, like all seafood, they have a short 'life'. Be very careful to buy only healthy-looking, pink prawns which are firm and undamaged. Avoid any that look limp and watery or have any hint of an unpleasant odour.

Fresh cooked prawns are sold still in their shells or ready-shelled. The shelled ones are very convenient, but the fresh flavour of newly-shelled prawns makes the effort involved in cleaning them worthwhile. The head is usually removed, but either head or tail may be left on.

The recipes here show how versatile prawns are. They can be enjoyed on their own and they combine beautifully with other ingredients. They are particularly suited to oriental dishes, marrying well with the crunchy texture of lightly cooked beansprouts and crisp chow mein noodles.

Sherry Prawn Starter

Cook's notes

To shell prawns, remove the head leaving only firm flesh in the shell. Starting at the head end, peel away the legs and shell. Turn and work down the other side, leaving the tail if desired.

Sherry prawn starter

5½ mins

Standing time: none

24 cooked king prawns, peeled except for tails
parsley, black olives and lemon wedges to garnish

SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter
75ml / 3fl oz dry sherry
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
1 garlic clove, crushed
pepper to taste

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, until melted. Add sherry, lemon juice, garlic and pepper.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until heated through.
3 Add prawns and stir well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes until hot.
4 Divide the prawns between individual serving plates and garnish with parsley, black olives, and lemon wedges. Serve with sauce.

Sherry prawn starter for 2: allow 6 prawns per person. Use half the ingredients for sauce. Melt butter at stage 2 for 20 seconds. Microwave sauce at stage 3 for 1½ minutes. Add prawns and microwave for 2½-3 minutes.

How to microwave prawns

Add *fresh-cooked prawns to casseroles and sauces towards the end of cooking time, so that they do not overcook.*

Check *prawns at the end of the minimum recommended cooking time. They should be moist and translucent.*

Prawn and pork bake

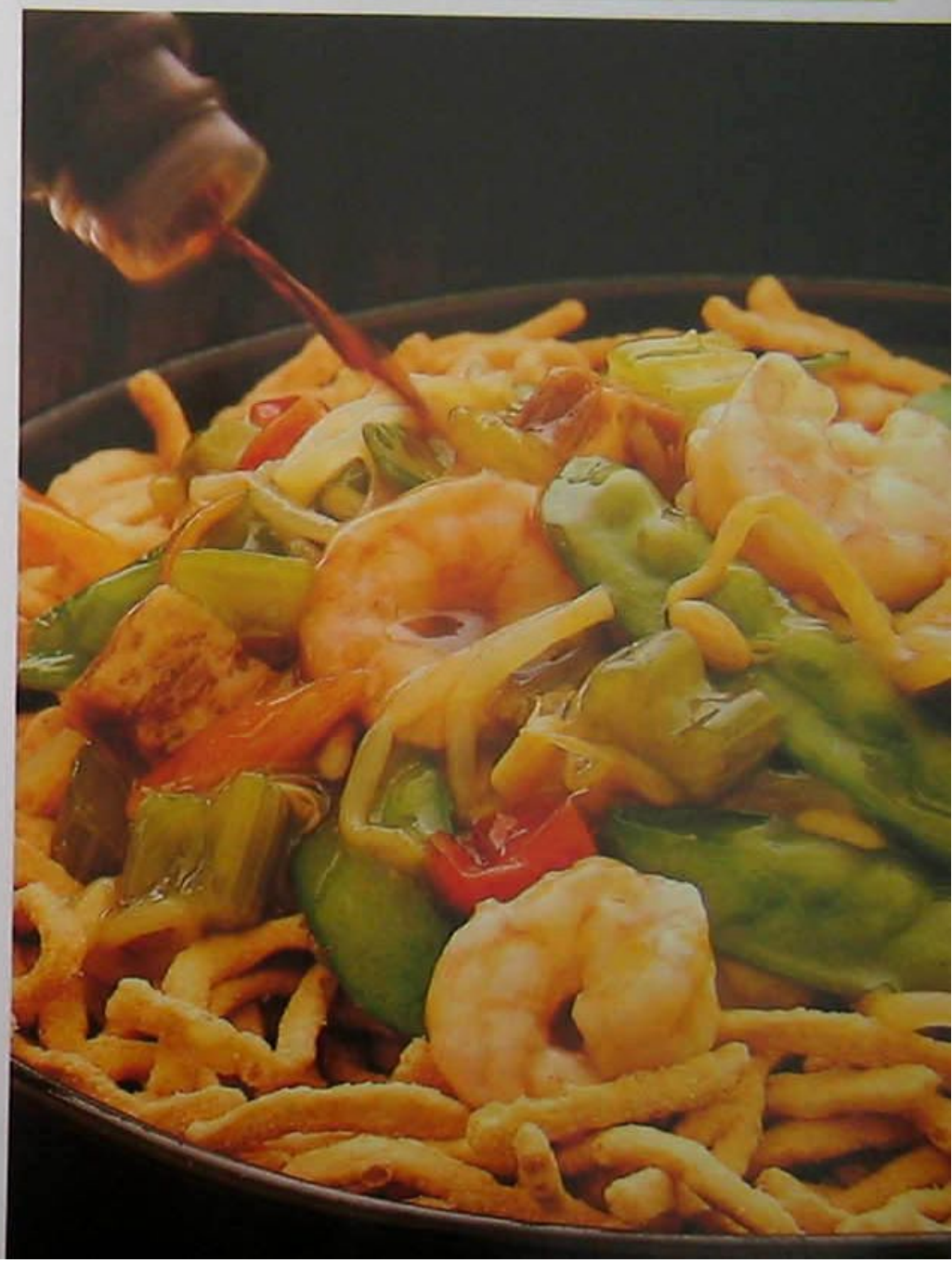
13 mins

Standing time: none

1 onion, finely chopped
3 celery stalks, chopped
150g / 5oz lean pork, cubed
½ red pepper, seeded and chopped
100g / 4oz fresh beansprouts, soaked in water for 10 minutes and drained
350g / 12oz frozen peeled prawns
2 tomatoes, cut into wedges
100g / 4oz mange tout peas
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
85g / 3oz can chow mein noodles

SERVES 4

1 Mix onion, celery, and pork in a bowl. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes; stir once.
2 Add red pepper and beansprouts. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes.
3 Add prawns, tomato and mange tout. Cover; microwave at 100% (High) 5-6 minutes; stir once.
4 Blend soy sauce into cornflour; add drained cooking liquid. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until thickened. Pour over prawns; mix well.
5 Serve with chow mein noodles.



Prawn and Pork Bake

Oriental omelette

21 mins

Standing time: none

Serve with crusty granary or French bread and a crisp green salad for a quick light lunch.

½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 small onion, chopped
100g / 4oz fresh beansprouts, soaked in cold water for 10 minutes and drained
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
4 eggs, lightly beaten
225g / 8oz frozen peeled prawns, salt and pepper to taste

SAUCE
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
15ml / 1tbls light soy sauce
200ml / 7fl oz water

SERVES 4

1 Combine green pepper, onion, beansprouts and garlic in a casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until tender, stirring once. Stir in cornflour. Add eggs, prawns, salt and pepper.

Oriental Omelette

2 Preheat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions.
3 Spoon one quarter of the egg mixture on to one side of the dish, another quarter on to the other side. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, until the underside is set and brown.
4 Turn over and microwave for a further 1-1½ minutes. Remove from dish and keep warm.
5 Reheat browning dish for 4 minutes at 100% (High) and repeat with remaining egg mixture.
6 Combine cornflour, sugar and soy sauce in a jug. Add the water and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, stirring three times until smooth.
7 Pour sauce over omelettes.

Slimmer's notes

Prawns are a special treat for slimmers. Oriental omelette has only 180Cal /755kJ per portion and Prawn and pork bake has 220Cal / 925kJ per portion if you omit the chow mein.

Prawn wrap-ups

8 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

8 rashers streaky bacon
8 cooked king prawns, shelled and cut in half
½ green pepper, seeded and cut into 16 pieces
5ml / 1tbls white wine or water
pinch of chilli powder
15ml / 1tbls apricot jam, sieved

MAKES 16

1 Place 2 layers of absorbent paper on a plate. Arrange half bacon rashers on paper and cover with another layer of paper. Place the rest of the bacon on top and cover with another layer of paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until bacon looks nearly cooked. Stand for 5 minutes.
2 Cut bacon rashers in half. Wrap half a prawn and a piece of green pepper in each piece of bacon. Secure with wooden cocktail sticks and place on a plate.
3 Mix soy sauce, wine, chilli powder and jam in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until the jam melts. Pour over prawns.
4 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, or until heated through.

Prawns in beer

5 mins

Standing time: none

Serve the prawns on cocktail sticks as a tasty nibble with drinks, or spoon into ramekins and serve with black rye bread as a starter or snack.

300g / 10oz frozen peeled prawns
150ml / ¼pt beer
5ml / 1tsp garlic salt
5ml / 1tsp snipped chives or chopped spring onions

SERVES 4

1 Combine prawns, beer, garlic salt and chives in a casserole and cover.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes or until prawns are heated through, stirring twice.

Cook's notes

Both Prawns in beer and Prawn wrap-ups make impressive drinks party snacks. For more ideas for canapés, see Part 16, page 426; Part 18, page 497 Part 32, page 885.

Left: *Prawn Wrap-ups*
Right: *Prawns in Beer*

Prawn starter

7 mins

Standing time: none

Use a browning dish to keep the prawns and vegetables crisp and fresh tasting. If uncooked prawns are unobtainable, use large cooked prawns. As these only need re-heating, microwave for only 30 seconds in stage 3.

12 uncooked large prawns (about 225g / 8oz) thawed if frozen
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
1 red pepper, seeded and sliced
4 spring onions, trimmed and thinly sliced diagonally
2 large garlic cloves, crushed
15ml / 1tbls chopped fresh thyme
15ml / 1tbls lemon juice

SERVES 4

1 Rinse and drain the prawns. Peel, leaving tails on. Make a shallow slit down back of each prawn and remove vein.
2 Pre-heat browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Swirl in oil and stir in red pepper, spring onions, garlic and thyme. Stir; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes.
3 Stir in prawns and lemon juice. Re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, or until the prawns are just cooked.

Italian Prawns with Rice

Italian prawns with rice

7 mins

Standing time: none

1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 small onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
400g / 14oz can crushed tomatoes
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
30ml / 2tbls red wine
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
salt and pepper to taste
300g / 12oz frozen peeled prawns, thawed
boiled rice to serve
grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Mix green pepper, onion and garlic in a 1.7L / 3pt casserole. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, until soft.
2 Add tomatoes, purée, wine, herbs, seasoning and prawns. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes. Stir once.
3 Serve with plain boiled rice and Parmesan cheese, if wished.

VARIATION
Serve Italian prawns with spaghetti or pasta shapes for a change.

A meal to impress

It is easy, using your microwave, to produce an impressive meal with that extra-special flair. Colours, textures and flavours stay bright and crisp, so you can present all the food at its very best.

Your guests will be convinced that you have spent hours over this elegant (but oh-so-simple) three-course meal! Make the dessert the day before so you don't have to worry about it on the day — you're free to deal with the starter and main course.

Reheating is ideal for the rice, but delicate vegetables should be served immediately after cooking for best results. Artichokes cook well by microwave — they retain their goodness and are ready in minutes! Serve them stylishly with two dips, one cold and creamy, the other warm and buttery, to make an unusual and delicious starter to the meal.

Serve a crisp, light white wine to complement the flavours of the meal really well, or for warm summer days serve a sparkling one. Any of these wines should be chilled for 1-2 hours to enjoy them at their best.

Artichokes with dips

17½ mins

Standing time: 7 mins

4 globe artichokes
150ml / ¼pt vegetable stock
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice

MUSTARD DIP
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
10ml / 2tsp lemon juice
60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt
60ml / 4tbls mayonnaise
5ml / 1tsp French mustard

HERBY BUTTER DIP
100g / 4oz butter
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
15ml / 1tbls snipped chives
15ml / 1tbls lime juice
pepper

SERVES 4

1 Trim artichoke stems to the base. Cut the top 2.5cm / 1in from the artichokes. Shake off excess water.

2 Stand the artichokes upright in a deep 23cm / 9in round dish. Pour the stock and lemon juice over them and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-18 minutes, or until the bases are tender and a leaf from close to the base pulls out easily. Baste and rearrange twice during cooking.

3 Stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, make the dips.

4 Mix the onion, garlic and lemon juice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until onion is tender. Add remaining ingredients; stand for 2-3 minutes.

5 Mix the butter and herbs, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes. Whisk in the lime juice and pepper and serve warm with the artichokes.

MENU

Artichokes with Dips
Tender artichokes with two contrasting dips

Poussins Veronique
Baby chickens on a bed of rice with a wine and grape sauce

Red Vegetable Kebabs
Carrots, peppers and tomatoes on skewers

Pineapple Ginger Tortoni
Refreshing ice cream with crisp biscuit

SERVES 4

Countdown

The day before
Make the ice cream and freeze until almost solid, then assemble the tortoni. Return to the freezer, covered, and allow to freeze completely.

Early on the day
Prepare both dips for the artichokes and refrigerate both in separate sealed containers.

In the afternoon
Microwave the rice according to the recipe on the back cover, Part 2. Leave to cool. Prepare the Red Vegetable Kebabs and set aside ready to microwave. Turn out the Pineapple Ginger Tortoni and return to the freezer on its serving dish.

An hour before serving
Remove the dips from the refrigerator. Microwave the poussins and the sauce. Leave the poussins covered with foil while microwaving the artichokes. Transfer the tortoni to the refrigerator. Microwave the butter dip at 100% (High) for 60 seconds or until melted and warm. Serve the artichokes with the dips.

During the first course
Microwave the vegetable kebabs, then reheat the rice at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. If necessary, reheat the sauce for the poussins while clearing the starter away. Serve the poussins on a bed of rice, with the sauce poured over, accompanied by the kebabs.

Poussins Veronique

25½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

10ml / 2tsp paprika
30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
60ml / 4tbls runny honey
85g / 3½oz butter
4 poussins (about 450-550g / 1-1¼lb each)

SAUCE
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
60ml / 4tbls chicken stock
150ml / ¼pt dry white wine
150ml / ¼pt milk
275g / 10oz seedless white grapes
60ml / 4tbls single cream

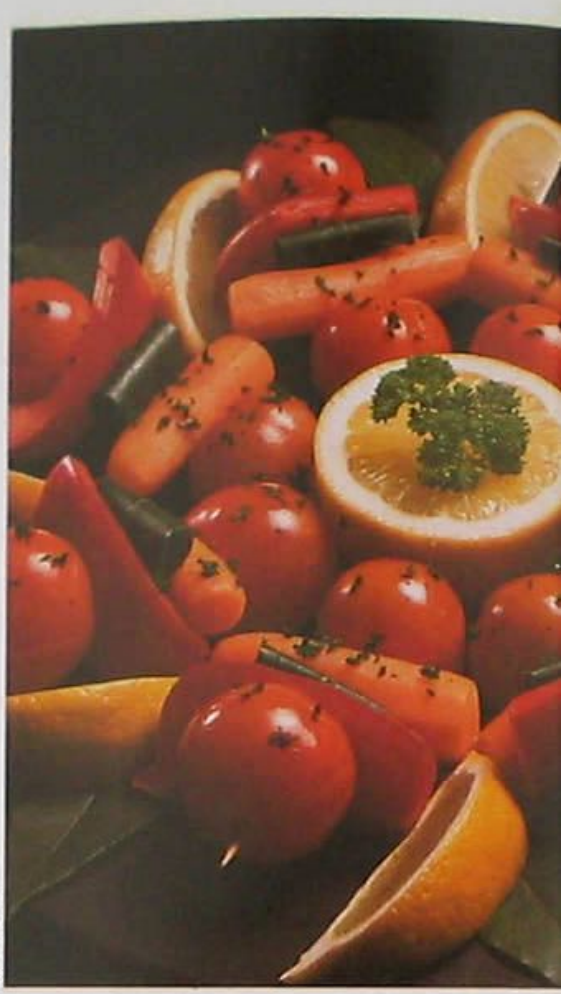
SERVES 4

1 Mix the paprika, soy sauce, honey and 40g / 1½oz of the butter in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds, or until melted.
2 Truss the legs of the poussins neatly and place, breast-side down, on a roasting rack. Brush with half the melted butter mixture.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 22-26 minutes, turning over and basting with the remaining mixture after half the cooking time. When cooked, the juices should no longer run pink. Cover and stand for 10 minutes.
4 To make the sauce, place the remaining butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until melted. Stir in the flour, stock, wine and milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, whisking every 15 seconds, until thick and smooth. Stir in the grapes and cream.
5 Serve the poussins on a bed of boiled rice with the sauce poured over the top.

Microtips

Make sure the poussins are well dusted with paprika and brushed with soy to ensure a good colour.

Poussin Veronique with rice



RAY DUNS

Red vegetable kebabs

7 mins

Standing time: none

12 baby carrots (or thin carrots cut in 5cm / 2in lengths)
15ml / 1tbls water
2 red peppers, seeded and cut in 18 pieces
18 cherry tomatoes (or 9 small tomatoes, halved)
12 bay leaves
50g / 2oz butter
chopped parsley, to garnish
lemon wedges, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Place the carrots in a dish with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3½ minutes, or until almost tender, stirring once.
2 Thread on to each of six small wooden skewers two tomatoes, one carrot, a piece of pepper and a bay leaf. Thread on to each of another six small wooden skewers two pieces of pepper, one carrot, one tomato and a bay leaf.

Above: *Red Vegetable Kebabs*
Right: *Pineapple Ginger Tortoni*

3 Arrange the kebabs on a dish, making sure they do not overlap. Place the butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until melted. Brush over kebabs, then microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, until the tomatoes are hot. Rearrange the kebabs after 2 minutes and brush with more butter. Arrange the kebabs on a serving dish, sprinkle with parsley and serve hot with lemon wedges.

Cook's notes

Kebabs of vegetables of a similar colour make an attractive accompaniment. For a main course in a red or tomato sauce, combine a selection of green vegetables: pieces of small courgettes, green pepper slices, bay leaves and small crisp broccoli spears. Part-cook the broccoli as for the carrots, then continue as in the recipe.

Pineapple ginger tortoni

3½ mins

Standing time: none

175g / 6oz ginger biscuits, crushed
lime slices to decorate
pineapple pieces, to decorate

ICE CREAM
1 large pineapple
finely grated zest and juice of 1 lime
15ml / 1tbls icing sugar
125ml / 4fl oz milk
1 egg
60ml / 2tbls caster sugar
150ml / ¼pt double cream
30ml / 2tbls rum or kirsch

SERVES 6-8

1 Halve the pineapple lengthways and scoop out the flesh, discarding any woody core. Finely chop the flesh and mix with the lime zest, juice and icing sugar.
2 Cover and freeze until slushy.
3 Microwave the milk at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, or until hot. Beat the egg with the caster sugar and gradually whisk in the hot milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes and stirring every 30 seconds until the custard is smooth and thickened.
4 Stir in the cream, allow to cool with a layer of cling film over the top to prevent skin from forming. Freeze until almost solid.
5 Whisk the frozen mixture until smooth then stir in the frozen pineapple and rum or kirsch. Cover and freeze for 2-3 hours or until almost firm.
6 Line the base of a 900g / 2lb loaf dish with foil and sprinkle with 50g / 2oz of the biscuit crumbs.
7 Beat 75g / 3oz of the biscuit crumbs into the ice cream and spread evenly in the prepared dish. Top with the remaining crumbs and freeze until solid.
8 Run a palette knife around the edges of the ice cream to loosen, then turn out on to an oblong freezer-proof dish. Decorate with lime and pineapple. Return to the freezer.

RAY DUNS

Beefburgers from frozen

Beefburgers are a big family favourite — you can microwave them from frozen in minutes, ready to pop in a bun, or turn them into a whole host of nourishing dishes.

Commercially frozen beefburgers are a really useful standby — easy to buy and convenient to use, they freeze well for up to three months. Don't just stick to plain burgers either. With a little imagination — and microwave assistance — they can be transformed into soups, potato-topped pies and stews.

ANDREW WHITTUCK

Buying burgers

Take care to check the packet labels so you select the type you want. For example, some varieties contain onions and / or added seasonings; some are 100% meat whereas others contain ingredients such as soya protein. Check the weight too — burgers can be 50g / 2oz or 100g / 4oz, depending on size.

Thawing and cooking burgers

The smaller, 50g / 2oz burgers can be cooked from frozen. However, the 100g / 4oz beefburgers should be thawed first at 20-30% (Defrost) as directed in the step, opposite, otherwise edges overcook while the centres remain cold.

When cooking any burger best results are achieved with a browning dish. However, you can use a roasting rack or plate (see step, opposite), provided the burgers are brushed with a browning agent

Big Burgers

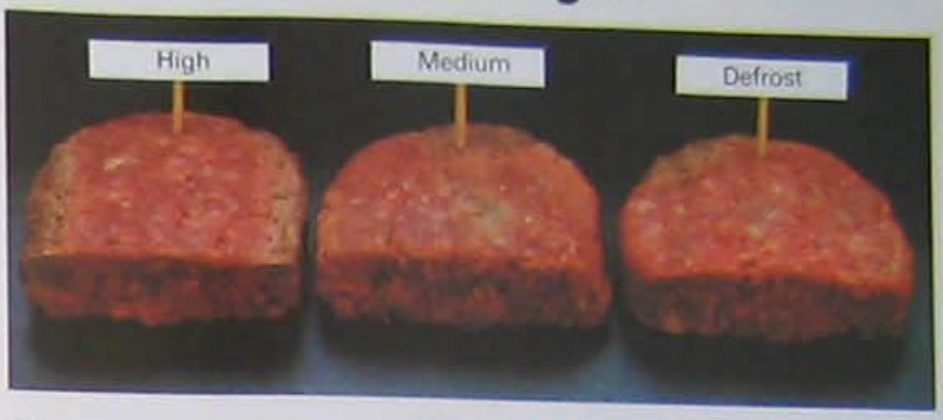
— use your favourite sauce or mix sauces and spices, including tomato sauce, mustard, curry concentrate and crushed peppercorns.

Four burgers can be microwaved at one time, whether using the larger 100g / 4oz size or the 50g / 2oz ones. If eight burgers are required, microwave in two batches.

Cook's notes

Really meaty burgers make more juice as they cook and need draining after cooking. The juices make a savoury sauce to serve with the burgers. Just add gravy powder and stock and microwave at 100% (High) until thickened.

How to thaw large beefburgers



Thaw *100g / 4oz beefburgers at 20-30% (Defrost) as at higher power patches of burger begin to cook before thawing is completed. Arrange four burgers in a ring on absorbent paper. Microwave, uncovered, at 20-30% (Defrost), allowing 10-12 minutes per 450g / 1lb; turn over and rearrange three times. Stand 2-3 minutes. To test if thawed, press with fingers: the burgers should be soft all over.*

How to microwave large beefburgers

On a plate or a roasting rack

Line *a plate with a double layer of absorbent paper or use a roasting rack. Arrange required number of thawed 100g / 4oz burgers in a circle on the plate or rack. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for half the time given in the chart below. Turn over and brush with a browning agent if liked. Microwave for remaining time, or until no longer pink, turning over and brushing once. Drain and let stand for 2-3 minutes.*

In a browning dish

Pre-heat *a browning dish for 5 minutes or as directed by manufacturers. Arrange the burgers in the dish and microwave, uncovered, for time given in chart; turn once. Drain and let stand for 2-3 minutes.*

Microtips

It is not necessary to oil the browning dish before adding the beefburgers as the burgers tend to give off their own juices. They brown better if not too greasy.

Always check the microwave manufacturer's handbook when heating a browning dish as instructions differ with each make. A browning dish should always be handled with oven gloves.

Microwave times* for 100g / 4oz beefburgers

QUANTITY	MICROWAVE TIME AT 100% (HIGH) ON RACK / PLATE	ON BROWNER
1	3-4 mins	2½-3 mins
2	4-5 mins	3½-4 mins
3	5-6 mins	4½-5 mins
4	6-7 mins	5-5½ mins

*Timings are for cooking burgers after thawing and standing.

Saucy burgers and rice

26½ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

Serve these burgers with carrots or peas to add extra colour. The soup can be any meaty variety, with vegetables in it if liked.

2 celery stalks, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
75g / 3oz long-grain white or brown rice, cooked
½ × 300g / 10.5oz can mushrooms, drained
283g / 10oz can beef soup
4 × 100g / 4oz beefburgers, thawed (see steps, page 1357)
2.5ml / ½tsp bottled brown sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp water
15ml / 1tbls cornflour

SERVES 4

VARIATIONS

Use another browning agent for the brown sauce, if liked, such as barbecue sauce, soy sauce or French mustard.

How to microwave Saucy burgers and rice

Place *the celery and onion in a large round dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, or until just tender, stirring once.*

Stir *in the rice, mushrooms and 200ml / 7fl oz of the soup. Arrange the beefburgers in a circle on top and cover the dish loosely.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes, or until the beefburgers are browned and tender; stir the rice and vegetable mixture and rearrange and turn the burgers three times.*

Mix *together the brown sauce and water and brush over the burgers. Set aside, covered. Measure the remaining soup and make up to 200ml / 7floz with water. Blend into the cornflour.*

Microwave, *uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2½ minutes, whisking twice, until thickened. Spoon over beefburgers; microwave, uncovered, for a further 1-1½ minutes to heat.*

Microtips

The time box for this recipe includes the time taken to thaw four 100g / 4oz burgers before cooking.

The standing time refers to the time the burgers are left to stand after thawing. There is no standing time after microwaving the whole dish.

Big burgers

9 mins

Standing time: none

8 × 50g / 2oz frozen beefburgers
10ml / 2tsp relish or chutney
4 granary rolls or baps, halved

FILLING
2 tomatoes, skinned, seeded and chopped
60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp lemon juice

SERVES 4

1 Arrange four burgers on a roasting rack, microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, turning over and rearranging three times.
2 Microwave the remaining four burgers on the roasting rack as before for 2 minutes, turning twice. Turn over and brush with the relish. Microwave a further 2-3 minutes.
3 For the filling: stir the tomatoes into the yoghurt with the seasoning and lemon juice.
4 Put the relish-coated burgers on roll bases; top each with the tomato mixture. Place the other four burgers on top and cover with the tops of the rolls. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until heated, rearranging once. Serve with relishes and garnish with salad.

Chilli burger soup

14 mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

This is a rich, warming soup, suitable to take in a flask as part of a packed lunch.

4 × 50g / 2oz frozen beefburgers
432g / 15.2oz can kidney beans, drained
300g / 10.6oz can condensed cream of tomato soup
275ml / ½pt water
1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli powder

SERVES 4

1 Put the beefburgers in a casserole and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, turning once.
2 Cut the beefburgers into 12mm / ½in pieces and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once. Drain on absorbent paper if necessary.
3 Wipe out the casserole. Return the burger pieces to the casserole, the add all the remaining ingredients. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9 minutes, or until heated, stirring two or three times. Stand for 2-3 minutes.

Beefburger omelette

14½ mins

Standing time: 4-5 mins

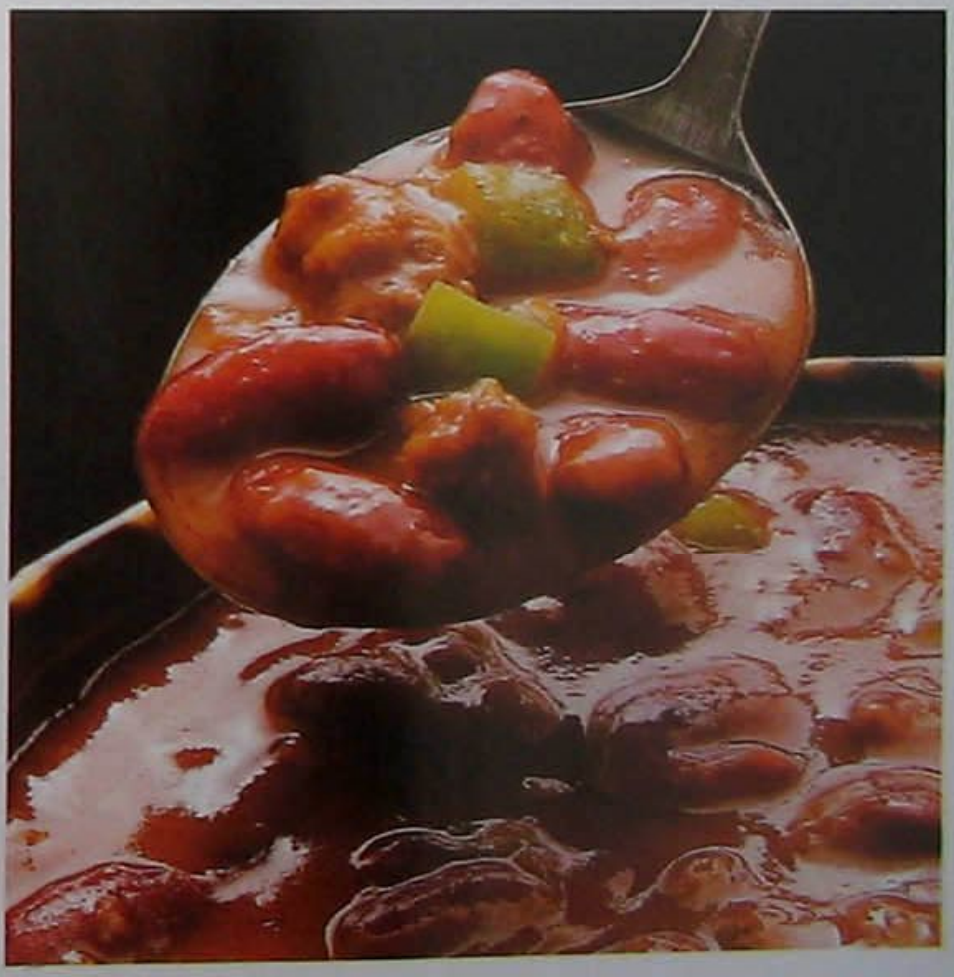
Serve hot with boiled potatoes and green vegetable, or cold with salad.

4 × 50g / 2oz frozen beefburgers
4 eggs
50g / 2oz spring onions, sliced
90ml / 6tbls milk
45ml / 3tbls mayonnaise
5ml / 1tsp made mustard
5ml / 1tsp dried mixed herbs
salt and pepper
50g / 2oz Cheddar, grated

SERVES 4

1 Put the beefburgers into a 23cm / 9in pie dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes; turn once. Break into small pieces. Continue microwaving at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, stirring once; drain.
2 In a bowl, mix together the eggs, onions, milk, mayonnaise mustard, herbs and seasoning. Pour the mixture into the pie dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 70% (Medium-High) for 4 minutes, rotating dish half a turn once. Continue to microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 5-6 minutes until almost set, spooning cooked egg from the edges to centre.
3 Sprinkle with cheese and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 1½ minutes until cheese is melting. Stand for 4-5 minutes.

Chilli Burger Soup



Beefburger Stroganoff

10½ mins

Standing time: none

4 × 50g / 2oz frozen beefburgers
100g / 4oz can mushrooms, drained and sliced
50g / 2oz spring onions, sliced
30ml / 2tbls sweet chutney
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper
150ml / ¼pt soured cream
225g / 8oz Chinese noodles, cooked, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Place the beefburgers in a casserole. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes; turn once. Break into small pieces. Continue microwaving for 2-2½ minutes until no longer pink, stirring once; drain if necessary. Add all the remaining ingredients except the cream and noodles.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4½-5 minutes until heated through, stirring once.
3 Stir in the soured cream, and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Serve over the noodles.

Beefburger slice

18 mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

8 × 50g / 2oz frozen beefburgers
90ml / 6tbls fresh breadcrumbs
1 egg, beaten
5ml / 1tsp dry mustard
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cumin
large pinch of garlic powder
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
salt and pepper

FILLING
450g / 1lb potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced

TOPPING
75g / 3oz Cheddar cheese, grated
40g / 1½oz Gruyère cheese, grated
7.5ml / 1½tsp dried parsley flakes

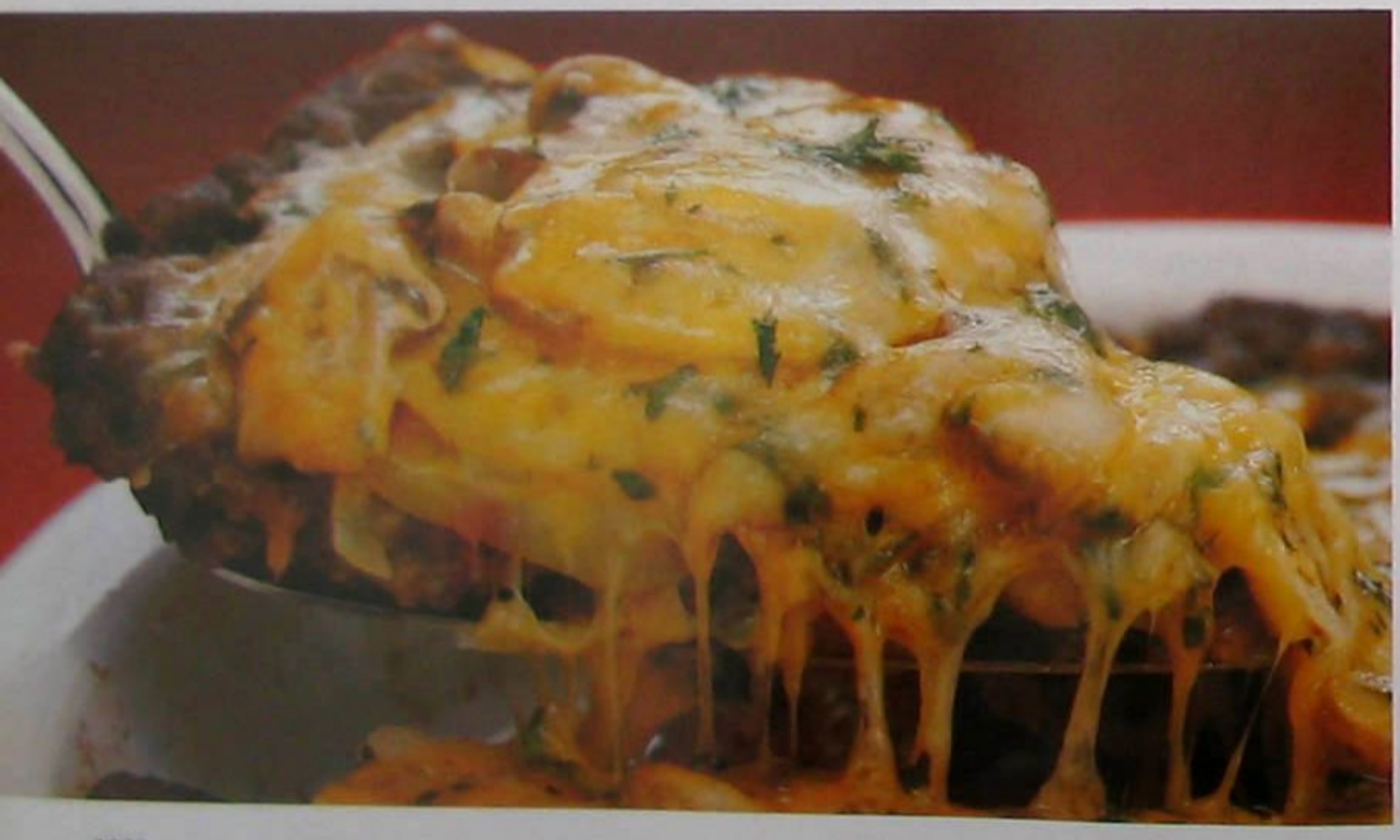
SERVES 4-6

1 Put four beefburgers into a 23cm / 9in pie dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, turning once. Repeat with remaining four burgers.
2 Crumble the beefburgers into a bowl and mix evenly with the breadcrumbs, egg, mustard, cumin, garlic, soy sauce and seasoning. Press over the base and sides of the pie dish. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until the meat is set, turning the plate twice.
3 Fill with layers of potato, onion, mushrooms and seasoning. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 9-11 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender when pierced with a skewer, rotating dish a quarter turn three times.
4 Sprinkle with the cheeses and parsley. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (Medium) for 2 minutes until the cheese is melted. Stand for 3-4 minutes.

Cook's notes

The meat and vegetables make plenty of delicious juices during cooking. Take care not to spill when transferring dish to the table and when cutting.

Beefburger Slice



Faster pasta

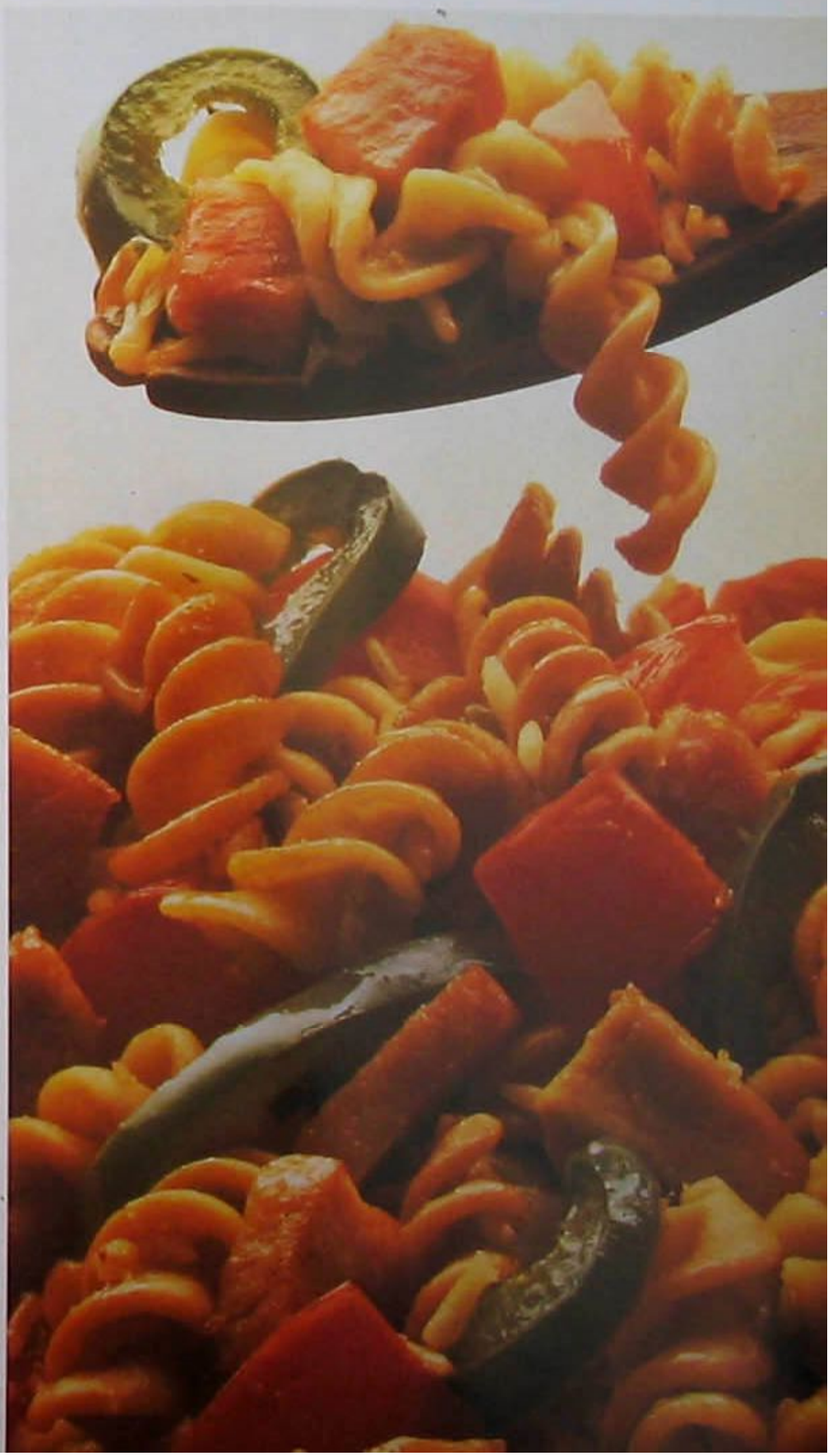
Pick a pasta — tasty noodles, spirals, shells or fun shapes to tempt the children — microwave with meatballs, in a casserole or delicious sauce, and you have meals that are sure to please.

Pasta comes in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours which lend themselves to any number of dishes. Pasta dishes are often thought of as very time consuming to prepare, with sauces bubbling away for hours. But with the microwave you can have a meal in under 25 minutes. A small amount of pasta can be microwaved, then drained and reserved on absorbent paper until needed (see Part 11, page 307). A larger quantity — as used in the recipes here — is best cooked conventionally and the sauce made in the meantime. You can half cook the pasta in the microwave, then leave it to stand in the water while you microwave the sauce (see Microtips, below).

Let the type of sauce you are making dictate the sort of pasta you use. Layered dishes lend themselves to the wide flat ribbon-like lasagne. Thin sauces are best served with imaginative shapes — shells, bows, wheels, spirals and so on — these hold the sauce particularly well and are especially popular with children.

Pasta dishes re-heat beautifully in the microwave, so leftovers become a quick treat of a meal — with no risk of scorching or the mess of sticky pans. Just make sure that all the pasta is covered with sauce to keep it from drying out.

Perky Pasta and Pork



Microtips

To microwave 225g / 8oz pasta shapes, place pasta in a deep bowl with a pinch of salt and 15ml / 1tbls oil. Cover with boiling water and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring twice. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes, or until tender. Drain and rinse.

Speedy supper spaghetti

24 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz cooked spaghetti
1 small onion, finely chopped
15ml / 1tbls water
450g / 14oz can tomatoes
71g / 2.5oz can tomato purée or paste
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic purée or paste
1 bay leaf
10ml / 2tsp soft brown sugar
salt and pepper
pinch of fennel seed
2 × 396g / 13oz packets frozen faggots in sauce, or Italian meatballs (see Part 38, page 1037)

SERVES 4

1 Put the onion into a 2.3L / 4pt casserole with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until tender, stirring halfway through cooking time.
2 Add tomatoes, tomato purée, garlic purée, bay leaf, sugar, salt and pepper and fennel seed. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 10-15 minutes, stirring twice.
3 Add the frozen faggots and sauce. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for a further 12-15 minutes, or until thoroughly heated, stirring three times. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.
4 Spoon the sauce over the spaghetti and serve.

Crispy macaroni cheese

10¾ mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz spiral macaroni
25g / 1oz butter
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
salt and pepper
pinch of cayenne pepper
350ml / 12fl oz milk
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, finely grated
5ml / 1tsp snipped chives
30ml / 2tbls dried breadcrumbs

SERVES 4

Speedy Supper Spaghetti

1 Cook macaroni conventionally and drain well.
2 Meanwhile, microwave the sauce. Melt the butter in a covered 2.3L / 4pt casserole at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds or until melted. Stir in the flour and seasoning and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds or until bubbly. Blend in the milk and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-7 minutes or until thickened, stir twice.
3 Add the grated cheese and stir until melted. If necessary, microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds to melt cheese. Stir in the macaroni and chives. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes, then stir well. Sprinkle with dried breadcrumbs and microwave for a further 2-2½ minutes or until heated through.

VARIATION
For Crispy Macaroni Cheese with Ham, add 100g / 4oz diced cooked ham with the macaroni and chives.

Crispy macaroni cheese for two: use half the ingredients. Melt butter for 15-30 seconds and microwave the sauce for 2-3 minutes at stage 2. Microwave the cheese to melt for 10-20 seconds if necessary and microwave the macaroni mixture for 1½-2 minutes; add breadcrumbs and microwave for a further 1-2 minutes.

Veal with tagliatelle

17 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

1 small onion, finely chopped
15g / ½oz butter
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
1 chicken stock cube, crumbled
100g / 4oz mushrooms
450g / 1lb veal escalopes, cut into 12mm / ½in strips
45ml / 3tbls medium sherry
275ml / ½pt single cream
225g / 8oz tagliatelle, cooked conventionally and drained
salt and pepper
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese

SERVES 4

1 Put the onion and butter into a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes until tender, stirring once halfway through cooking.
2 Stir in flour, stock cube, mushrooms and veal. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until beginning to thicken. Stir once, halfway through cooking.
3 Add the sherry, cream, tagliatelle, salt and pepper and grated Parmesan cheese. Cover and reduce power to 50% (Medium). Microwave for 10-15 minutes, or until thoroughly heated. Stir twice during cooking, but do not allow mixture to boil or it may separate.
4 Cover and stand for 3 minutes.

Veal with Tagliatelle

Hasty pasta and ham

7 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz penne pasta (pasta quills)

SAUCE

2 small courgettes, thinly sliced
100g / 4oz frozen peas
1 spring onion, thinly sliced
15g / ½oz butter
10ml / 2tsp chopped parsley
pinch of dried basil
pepper
10ml / 2tsp plain flour
175ml / 6fl oz evaporated milk
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
100g / 4oz cooked ham, cut in strips

SERVES 4

1 Cook pasta conventionally.
2 Combine the courgettes, peas, spring onion, butter, parsley, basil and pepper in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes until tender, stirring once.
3 Stir in the flour and the evaporated milk. Microwave, uncovered at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes until thickened slightly, stirring every minute.
4 Drain the pasta and add to the sauce with the cheese and ham. Stir well and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes to heat through.

Hasty pasta and ham for two: use half the ingredients. Microwave the vegetables for 1½-2 minutes at stage 2. Stir in the flour and the milk and microwave for 1-1½ minutes. Add the pasta and microwave for a further 1½-2 minutes.

Cook's notes

If you have difficulty finding canned onion rings for Quick Beef 'n' Spinach Pasta, use frozen French fried onion rings, prepared according to the instructions on the packet and served on the side to garnish this dish.

Perky pasta and pork

25 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

45ml / 3tbls long-grain rice
25g / 1oz margarine
1 garlic clove, crushed
225g / 8oz lean pork, diced
50g / 2oz cooked ham, diced
1 onion, chopped
1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped
4 tomatoes, chopped
275ml / ½pt chicken stock
100g / 4oz pasta spirals, cooked conventionally
pinch of ground cumin
pinch of dried oregano
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Mix the rice, margarine and garlic in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, stirring once.
2 Stir in the pork, ham, onion, green pepper, tomatoes and stock. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Stir thoroughly once, halfway through cooking.
3 Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for 14 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes. Add the pasta, cumin, oregano, salt and pepper. Cover and microwave for a further 8-9 minutes, until heated through, stirring twice during cooking and again at the end.
4 Cover and stand for 5 minutes.

Quick beef 'n' spinach pasta

18 mins

Standing time: none

300g / 10.6oz frozen leaf spinach
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
290g / 10.2oz can cream of celery soup
75g / 3oz full-fat soft cheese
salt and pepper to taste
225g / 8oz cooked tagliatelle
79.4g / 2.8oz French fried onion rings (optional)

SERVES 4

1 Pierce the packet and microwave the spinach at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, remove, drain thoroughly and chop.
2 Place the mince in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Break up with a fork and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-10 minutes until the mince is no longer pink in colour. Stir twice during cooking.
3 Add the spinach, mushrooms, soup, cheese and seasoning to the mince; add the cooked tagliatelle and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes. Stir, sprinkle with the fried onion rings, if using, and microwave for a further 5-7 minutes until really hot.

Economy Stroganoff

12 mins

Standing time: none

Classic beef Stroganoff is made with expensive beef fillet. By using mince, you can enjoy the flavour at a fraction of the cost.

225g / 8oz flat noodles, cooked conventionally and drained
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 small onion, finely chopped
290g / 10.2oz can cream of mushroom soup
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic purée or paste
pepper to taste
125ml / 4fl oz soured cream

SERVES 4

1 Crumble mince into a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Add onion, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until meat is no longer pink, stirring twice with a fork to break it up during cooking.
2 Stir in soup, mushrooms, Worcestershire sauce, garlic purée or paste and pepper. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-10 minutes until hot and bubbly, stirring twice.
3 Blend in soured cream, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes. Pour over the noodles.

Top: *Quick Beef 'n' Spinach Pasta*
Bottom: *Economy Stroganoff*

Cooking with garlic

Garlic gives a real boost to any number of dishes. Add it to stews and stuffings or butter and sauces, then microwave to bring out its distinctive flavour to the full.

Garlic is an invaluable ingredient. Its strong, distinctive flavour gives real character to all types of savoury dishes, from fish and chicken to vegetables and bread. It is also known for its purifying qualities, being particularly good for the digestive system, for example. You will find that cooking by microwave captures all this garlicky goodness, taste and distinction.

When using garlic, remember to proceed with some caution, adding sufficient to flavour the dish but not overpower it — depending on how garlicky you like your food, of course. Crushed garlic tends to flavour food most strongly as it releases the juices into the food. Chopped or left whole, garlic does not have such an effect — unless a whole piece is chewed accidentally.

Preparing garlic

Garlic can be chopped, sliced, crushed or left whole and added to

Garlic-buttered Chops

ANDREW WHITTUCK

recipes. If chopping, slicing or leaving whole, separate as many cloves as you need from the bulb, trim off the root end and peel. Cut away any brown patches (they give a stale flavour). Remember to remove whole garlic cloves from a dish before serving.

The traditional way to crush garlic is to put the whole, peeled clove on a plate or wooden board, add a pinch of salt and mash the garlic to a paste with the flat side of a knife. A garlic press is quicker and less messy. Top and tail the clove (there is no need to peel) and crush in the press over the dish to be flavoured.

Garlic-buttered chops

18 mins

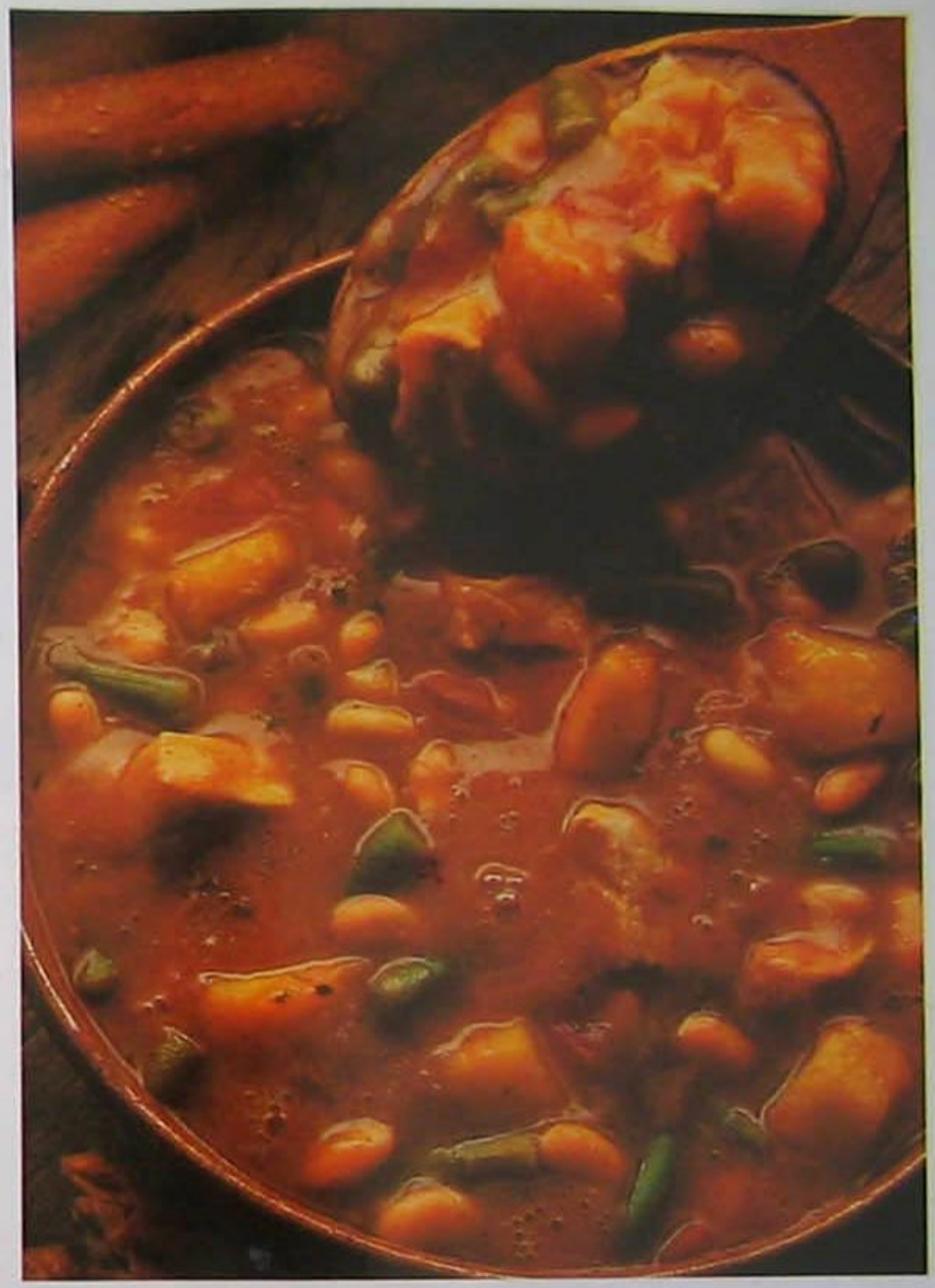
Standing time: 5 mins

Garlic and lamb is a favourite mix. You will find this recipe meltingly good.

50g / 2oz butter
1 garlic clove, crushed
10ml / 2tsp vegetable oil
4 large lamb loin chops

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter in a dish and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5-10 seconds, or until softened. Add the garlic and mash together.
2 Form the butter into a roll, 2.5cm / 1in in diameter. Wrap the roll in freezer tissue and place in the freezer for 20 minutes.
3 Meanwhile, pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Swirl in the oil. Add the chops and sear on both sides. Cover loosely with buttered greaseproof paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
4 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes. Remove paper and turn chops. Continue microwaving for 6-8 minutes, or until tender. Stand for 5 minutes.
5 Meanwhile, remove the butter roll from the freezer, unwrap and slice into four rounds. Top each chop with a round of butter and serve immediately.



French Country Stew

French country stew

30 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

410g / 15¼oz can cannellini beans, drained
300g / 10.6oz can tomato soup
300g / 10.6oz can French onion soup
227g / 8oz frozen sliced green beans
450g / 1lb swedes, peeled and cut into 2cm / ¾in pieces
2.5ml / ½tsp dried sage
2.5ml / ½tsp dried marjoram
3 garlic cloves, crushed
salt and pepper
1 bay leaf
350g / 12oz lean boneless pork, cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes

SERVES 4

1 In a large bowl, combine all the ingredients except the pork; mix well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 25-30 minutes, or until the swede is tender, stirring two or three times.
2 Stir in the pork and re-cover. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes, or until the pork is no longer pink. Leave to stand, covered, for 10 minutes. Remove the bay leaf before serving.

Milanese pasta sauce

7 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz lean minced beef or spicy Italian sausage, skinned
283g / 9.98oz can Milanese or Bolognese sauce
75ml / 3fl oz water
300g / 10½oz can chopped mushrooms, drained
8 pimiento-stuffed olives, sliced
15ml / 1tbls red wine or red wine vinegar
10ml / 2tsp sugar
5ml / 1tsp dried parsley
2 garlic cloves, crushed
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Break up the minced beef or sausage and place in a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until the meat is no longer pink, stirring and breaking apart once; drain off any excess fat. Break up the meat.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, or until hot and bubbling, stirring once. Serve over cooked spaghetti and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, if liked.

Herby garlic bread

1 min

Standing time: 1 min

1 French loaf
100g / 4oz softened butter
3 garlic cloves, crushed
10ml / 2tsp dried mixed herbs

SERVES 6

1 Slice the French loaf on the diagonal into 2.5cm / 1in slices, without cutting right through.
2 Using a round-bladed knife, work the butter on a plate until it is soft and spreadable. Mix the garlic and herbs into it.
3 Spread each slice of bread with the garlic butter, then press back into shape. Spread any remaining butter across the top. If the French

Above: *Stuffed Mushrooms*
Right: *Beans in Garlic Sauce*

loaf is too long to fit in the cooker, cut it in half. Wrap in greaseproof paper, twisting ends together.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until the butter has melted and soaked in. Stand, wrapped, for 1 minute.

VARIATIONS
Rich garlic bread: replace the garlic butter mixture with 100g / 4oz full-fat soft cheese flavoured with garlic and herbs.
Garlic rolls: cut four wholemeal or white rolls in half. Work together 50g / 2oz butter and 1 large garlic clove and use to butter the rolls. Wrap each roll separately as for Herby Garlic Bread. Microwave for 1 minute and stand for 1 minute.

Cook's notes

Microwaved garlic bread is very speedy, but the crust is softer than usual. For crisper results, unwrap and stand the bread on a baking tray after microwaving. Heat under a medium grill for 2-3 minutes.

Stuffed mushrooms

3½ mins

Standing time: none

16 flat or cap mushrooms
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
1 small celery stalk, chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
90ml / 4tbls fresh breadcrumbs
1 large garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp dried thyme
salt and pepper
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried marjoram
pinch of ground nutmeg
1 small egg, beaten

SERVES 4

1 Wipe the mushrooms, then remove and chop the stalks. Combine the chopped stalks, butter, celery and onion in a bowl. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes, stirring once.
2 Stir in the remaining ingredients. Spoon into the mushroom caps, mounding up as much as possible. Arrange the caps on a plate lined with absorbent paper, placing the largest caps to the outside. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, giving the plate half a turn once.

Beans in garlic sauce

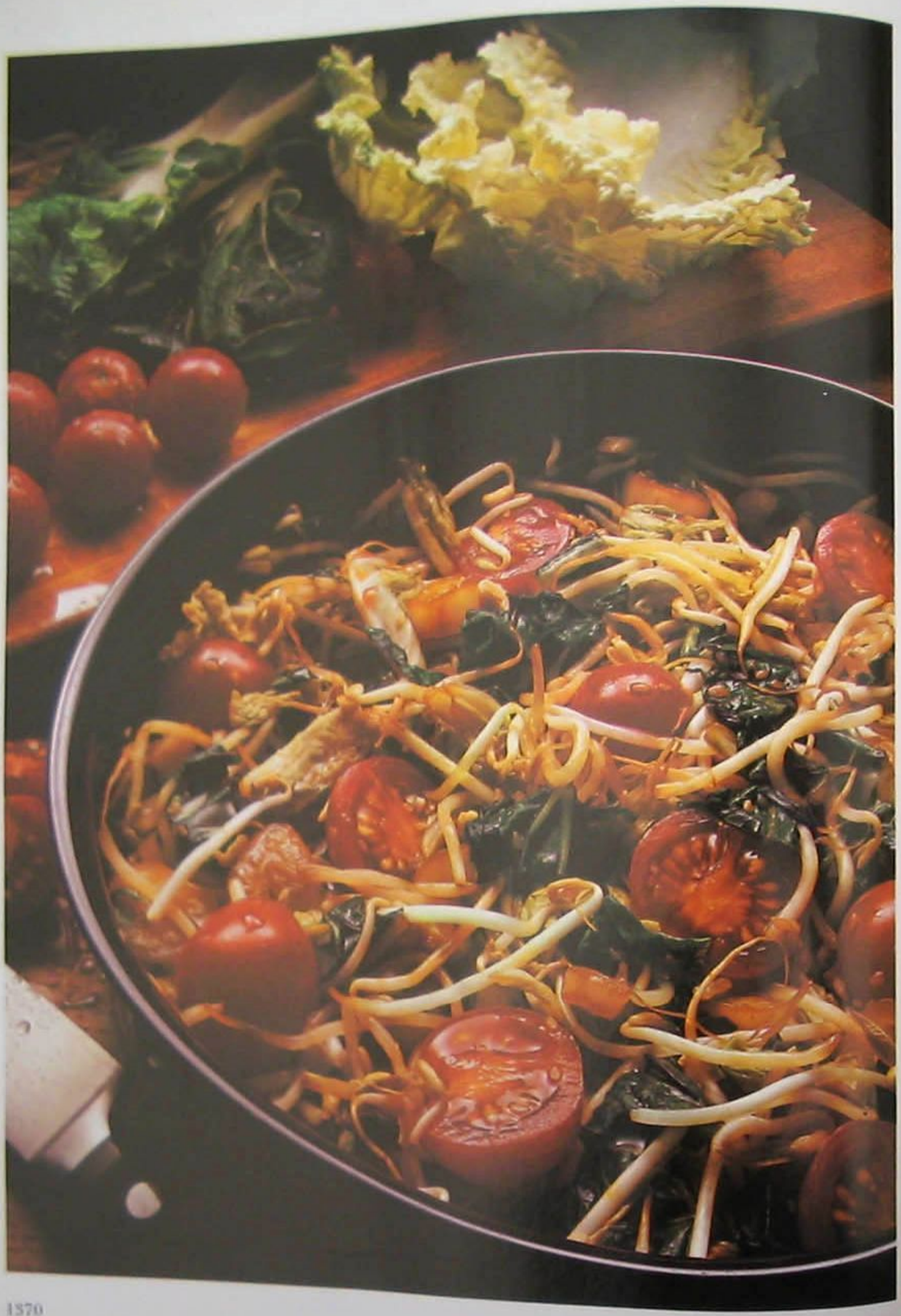
12½ mins

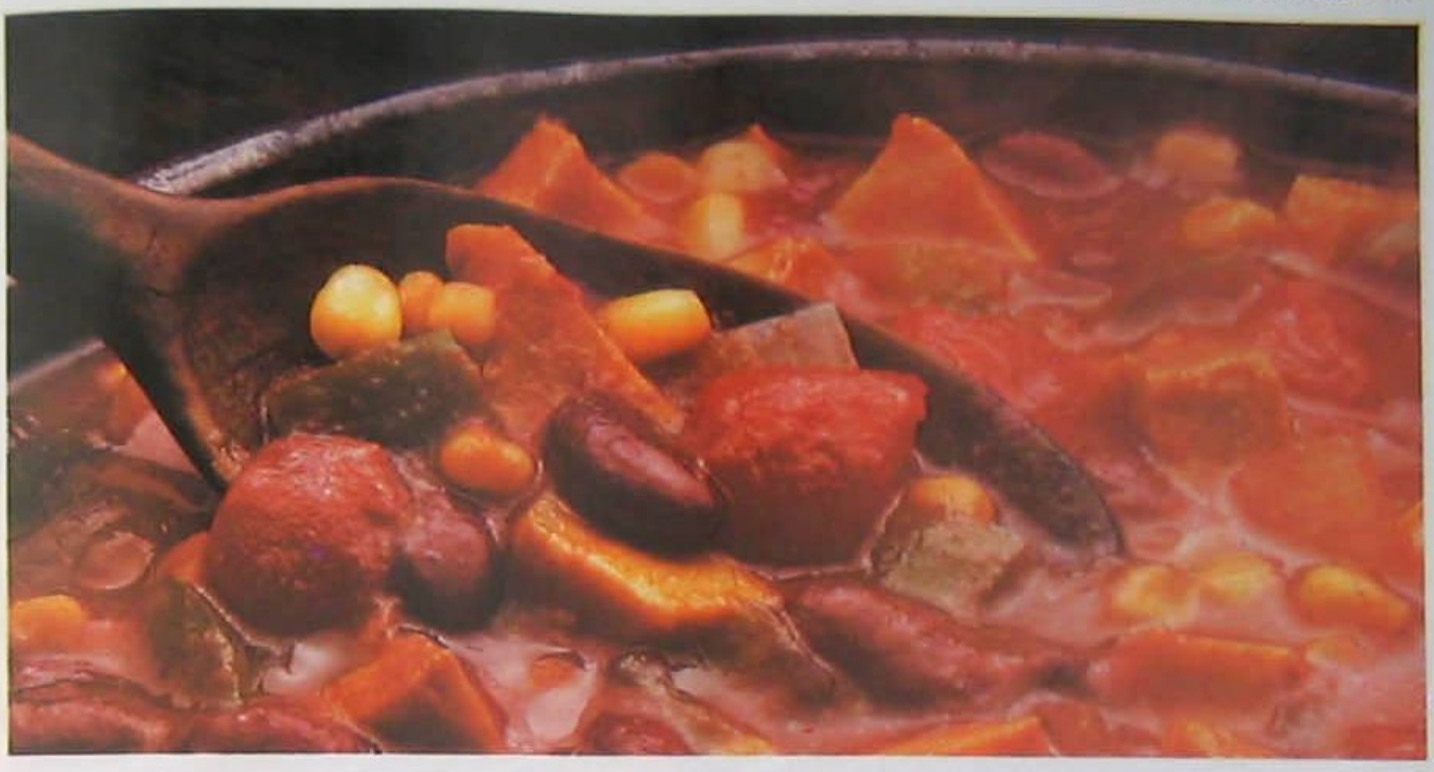
Standing time: 2-3 mins

450g / 1lb frozen green beans
60ml / 4tbls water
100g / 4oz ricotta or curd cheese
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt
1 garlic clove, crushed
salt
2 or 3 drops of Tabasco

SERVES 4

1 Place the green beans in a bowl and add the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 11-13 minutes, stirring once; drain. Stand, covered, 2-3 minutes.
2 Meanwhile, in a blender, blend the remaining ingredients. Spoon into a bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1½-2½ minutes, or until bubbling; stir twice. Pour the sauce over the beans to serve.





Oriental vegetables

5 mins

Standing time: none

This dish can be served as a main dish for two, or as an accompaniment to plainly cooked meat or fish for four.

30ml / 2tbls soy sauce
5ml / 1tsp sugar
30ml / 2tbls sesame seeds
2 garlic cloves, crushed
100g / 4oz Chinese leaves or cabbage, shredded
2 stalks pak soi (or bok choy), sliced (see Cook's notes, right)
225g / 8oz fresh beansprouts, soaked in cold water for 10 minutes and drained
8 cherry tomatoes, cut in half, or four small tomatoes, quartered

SERVES 4

1 Blend the soy sauce, sugar, sesame seeds and garlic in a large bowl. Stir in the Chinese leaves and pak soi. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender, stirring once.
2 Stir in the beansprouts and tomatoes. Re-cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes, or until beansprouts are heated.

Cook's notes

Pak soi, or bok choy, is a type of cabbage (see Part 48, page 1311) and may be difficult to find. Substitute with celery, if necessary, or use four spinach leaves for more colour. Microwave as directed.

Slimmer's notes

As a main dish this is a perfect slimmer's recipe. Full of health-giving vegetables, it comes out at just 155Cal / 650kJ per serving.

Chicken chilli

29 mins

Standing time: none

Serve this spicy chilli dish over perfect fluffy white rice.

1 onion, chopped
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
3 garlic cloves, crushed
440g / 15½oz can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
397g / 14½oz can plum tomatoes

Above: *Chicken Chilli*
Left: *Oriental Vegetables*

283g / 9.98oz can tomato sauce
198g / 7oz can sweetcorn kernels, drained
30ml / 2tbls red wine vinegar
30ml / 2tbls Worcestershire sauce
225g / 8oz cooked chicken or turkey, cut into pieces
30ml / 1tbls demerara sugar
5ml / 1tsp chilli powder
pinch of mustard powder
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Combine the onion, green pepper and garlic in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.
2 Add the remaining ingredients, stirring to break up the tomatoes; re-cover. Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) for 25-30 minutes, stirring once.

Microtips

The amount of chilli used here is only a guide. Adjust to suit personal taste, but remember that microwave cooking brings out its flavour strongly, so slightly less is needed.

STAR RECIPE

Garden vegetable platter

An eye-catching and flamboyant array of vegetables is sure to steal the show at any dinner party — tender-crisp and shining with a buttery glaze, this dish will complement any main meal.

This elegant platter of perfectly cooked vegetables, bathed in a buttery glaze, makes a fitting accompaniment to any main course, from a simple roast to a sophisticated fish dish.

Choose only the best, freshest vegetables, in peak condition, for the best results. Do not store them for more than a day in the refrigerator, or they will start to lose their vibrant colour and full flavour which make this dish so special.

Yellow squash make an interesting change from the green variety and are basically courgettes, and may be sold as such. If these are not available, cut the courgettes in rings and use a different green vegetable, such as French beans, to mix with the carrots. (Use about 100g / 4oz beans, topped and tailed, and cook as in the main recipe.)

The browned butter glaze which is quickly microwaved (see Microtips, opposite) adds a final finishing touch and enhances the bright colours of the vegetables giving an attractive shine and a really professional appearance to this spectacular dish.

Garden vegetable platter

7 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb fresh asparagus spears
100g / 4oz button mushrooms
175g / 6oz yellow squash, cut in 12mm / ½in slices
1 courgette, cut in thin strips
1 carrot, cut in thin strips
30ml / 2tbls water
1 drained, canned whole pimiento to garnish
browned butter (see Microtips, right)

SERVES 6-8

How to microwave Garden vegetable platter

Trim *the asparagus, cutting off the woody end part of the stems so that they are of an even length. Arrange the asparagus in a bundle in the centre of a large round platter.*

Add *the other vegetables, placing them in clusters, the mushrooms and squash rounds at either end of the asparagus, and the mixed carrot and courgette at the sides.*

Sprinkle *evenly with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, or until the vegetables are just cooked, giving the platter a quarter turn every 2-3 minutes.*

Test *the vegetables for doneness by pressing lightly or piercing with a sharp knife. When the vegetables are just tender, remove and leave to stand for 5 minutes to complete cooking.*

Cut *pimiento in a long spiral strip and arrange around the asparagus in a bow. Prepare the browned butter and spoon over the platter just before serving.*

Microtips

To make browned butter, place 100g / 4oz butter in a heatproof dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring every 2-3 minutes, until brown. Skim off any foam and use as directed.

To cut even pimiento strips, place a dry pimiento on a board and trim the edge. Run a sharp knife point around, spiralling parallel to the cut edge to give a long strip to use as a garnish.

Cooking for under fives

When you have tiny babies, toddlers or small children to look after, anything that can help you save time on chores is a bonus — so let the microwave take the strain.

From the very first day home with the baby the microwave will prove to be an invaluable asset. You can use it to heat through a baby's bottle in under a minute (although it shouldn't be used for sterilizing bottles or teats). Later it will be equally valuable for re-heating bought baby solids or home-made purées.

Microwaving is also a healthy way of cooking. The minimum of water is required for cooking vegetables, which means the maximum of nutrients are retained. Use the microwave to prepare vegetable and fruit purées for weaning babies and fresh vegetables for toddlers — that way you can be sure they are getting as much goodness as possible. Moreover, as these types of foods freeze well and are easy to thaw and heat in the microwave it is worth making double the quantity at a time. An ice cube tray is convenient for freezing purées in small amounts.

As the children get older, the fun food they enjoy is easy and speedy to cook in the microwave. Nutty Toffee Apples and Lollipops will always be popular and a nutritious, imaginative dish like Fish Finger Wig-wam can be swiftly put together.

Left to right: *Beetroot, Cheesy Vegetable Purée and Carrot and Orange Purée*

ANDREW WHITTUCK

Cheesy vegetables

16 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Suitable for up to 3 months

2 × 225g / 8oz baking potatoes, scrubbed and pricked
450g / 1lb small young turnips, diced
60ml / 4tbls water
50g / 2oz Cheddar or Red Leicester cheese, grated

MAKES 700ml / 1¼pt

1 Microwave the potatoes at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes or until still slightly firm, re-arranging once. Stand, wrapped in foil, for 5 minutes or until soft.
2 Meanwhile, place the turnips and water in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.
3 Cut the potatoes in half and scoop out the flesh into a bowl. Add the drained turnip and mash well until smooth. Add the cheese and mix well. Serve warm.

Carrot and orange purée

8 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Suitable for up to 3 months

450g / 1lb young carrots, sliced
90ml / 6tbls water
30-45ml / 2-3tbls unsweetened orange juice

MAKES 500ml / 18fl oz

1 Microwave the carrots and water in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes; stir once.
2 Stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Cool slightly, then purée until smooth. Stir in the orange juice and serve warm.

Cook's notes

Once the baby is happily weaned these tasty purées can be mixed with other foods for more substantial fare. For example, add cooked, flaked and boned white fish.

Beetroot purée

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Suitable for up to 3 months

450g / 1lb beetroot
60ml / 4tbls water
75g / 3oz low-fat soft cheese

MAKES 500ml / 18fl oz

1 Prick the skin of the beetroots with a fork. Place in a large bowl with the water.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, or until the skin peels away easily and the beetroots feel soft. Re-arrange the beetroots halfway through cooking. Stand for 5 minutes.
3 Peel the beetroots, then purée in a blender or food processor with a little of the cooking liquid until smooth. Allow to cool slightly, then stir in the soft cheese until well blended. Serve warm.

Microwaving times for thawing purées

QUANTITY	TIME AT 100% (HIGH)
30ml / 2tbls (1 cube)	40-45 seconds
50ml / 2fl oz (2 cubes)	60-65 seconds
125ml / 4fl oz (4 cubes)	1½-2 minutes

How to freeze and thaw puréed baby food

Spoon *30ml / 2tbls prepared purée into each section of an ice cube tray. Freeze until solid, then turn cubes into a freezer bag, seal and freeze for up to 6 months.*

To thaw: *put cube(s) into a small bowl. Place in cooker with a glass of water. Microwave until melted (see chart), mashing once. Test temperature before using.*

How to warm baby food

Remove *the metal cap from a 113g / 4oz glass jar of baby food, or transfer contents of a can of baby food to small bowl and cover.*

Microwave *at 50% (Medium) for 30-60 seconds, stirring halfway through and at the end; test the temperature before feeding the baby.*

Guidelines for microwaving Baby foods

- Microwave a 200ml / 7fl oz bottle of formula milk at 100% (High) for 40-45 seconds. Shake well to avoid warm spots then test the temperature by sprinkling a few drops on the inner wrist before feeding the baby.
- Warm beakers of diluted orange juice or cow's milk; microwave a 125ml / 4fl oz trainer beaker at 50% (Medium) for about 30-40 seconds. Test temperature before serving.
- Reserve small portions from family meals and purée, then re-heat in the microwave for the weaned baby. Remember that toddlers, like adults, need a wide variety of foods to ensure they get all the nutrients they need for good health and growth.
- Always stir baby food and drinks well halfway through and at the end of heating time, to avoid any warm spots, then test the temperature before serving.
- Do not use the microwave to sterilize teats and bottles — they should be sterilized the normal way.
- Place a glass of water in the microwave when heating or cooking small amounts of food or drink: excess microwaves will be absorbed and there will be no risk of overheating.
- Check that bottles, beakers, bowls and so on are microwave safe before using them in the microwave.

Fluffy Mash with Gravy

Fluffy mash with gravy

6 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

Suitable for 3-6 months

For older children, mix chopped vegetables into the potato.

1 large potato, diced
15ml / 1tbls water
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
dash of milk

GRAVY
5ml / 1tsp meat dripping
7.5ml / 1½tsp plain flour
150ml / ¼pt hot meat stock

SERVES 1

1 Microwave the potato and water at 100% (High) in a covered bowl for 4-5 minutes; stir once. Stand 3 minutes; drain and mash with butter and milk.
2 Blend together the dripping and flour, then stir in the stock. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, stirring twice, until thickened. Serve over potato.

Nutty toffee apples

3 mins

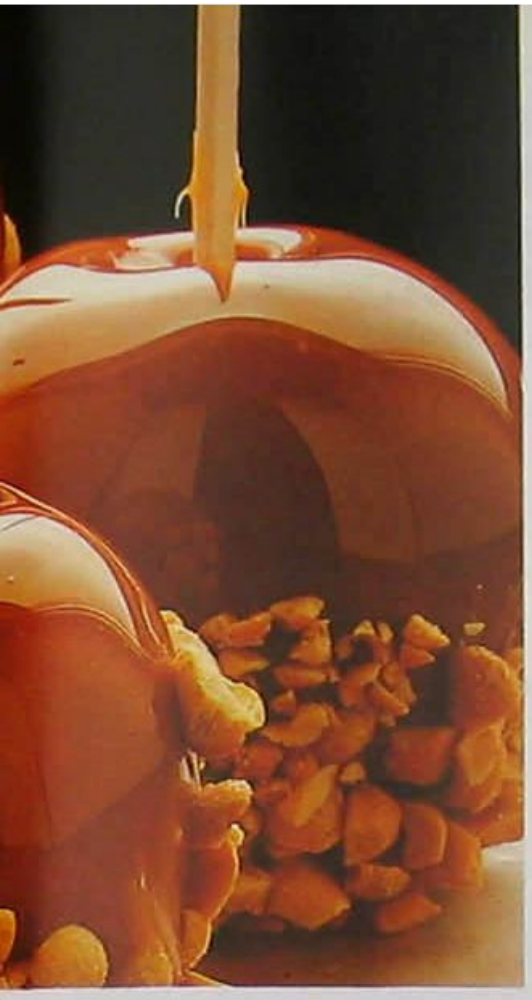
Standing time: none

Suitable for over fours

6 red apples, washed and drained
6 wooden lollipop sticks
75g / 3oz unsalted peanuts, roughly chopped
4 × 100g / 4oz bars of toffee
30ml / 2tbls water

MAKES 6

1 Remove the stalks from the apples and insert a stick in the stem end. Place the chopped nuts in a small bowl.
2 Break the toffee bars into small pieces and place in a 1.1L / 2pt bowl. Add the water and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes or until melted, hot and bubbly, stirring every minute. Beat well.
3 Coat the apples one at time: dip in the soft toffee, coating evenly all over; drain slightly, then roll the bottom half in the nuts.
4 Stand the toffee apples on baking paper and leave to cool and set before serving.



Nutty Toffee Apples

Kids kebabs

11 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Suitable for over threes

350g / 12oz lean minced beef
90ml / 6tbls breadcrumbs
½ small onion, finely chopped
salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée
1 small egg, beaten
16 drained canned baby potatoes
8 small tomatoes, halved
16 button mushrooms

SERVES 4

1 Combine the mince, breadcrumbs, onion and seasoning in a bowl. Mix well, then stir in the purée. Add sufficient beaten egg to bind.
2 Shape into 16 small meatballs. Place in a large shallow dish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, turning once.
3 Thread on to each of eight wooden skewers: a potato, tomato, meatball and mushroom; repeat.
4 Place four kebabs in the shallow dish, brushing them with the meat juices. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Repeat with the remaining kebabs. Stand for 5 minutes. Slide kebabs off skewers to serve.

Lollipops

9 mins

Standing time: none

Suitable for over fours

225g / 8oz sugar
175g / 6oz golden syrup
50ml / 2fl oz water
1.5ml / ¼tsp orange, lemon or peppermint flavouring
few drops orange, yellow or green food colouring

MAKES 12

How to microwave Lollipops

Make *the lollipop moulds: cut 2.5cm / 1in from top of 12 × 250ml / 9fl oz wax-coated paper drinking cups.*

Grease *the inside of the moulds. Punch a small hole low down in the side of the mould and insert a stick.*

Place *the moulds, rim-side down, on a sheet of foil that has been greased with butter or vegetable oil.*

Combine *sugar, syrup and water in a heatproof, deep 3.1L / 5½pt bowl or jug. With a wet pastry brush, brush down sugar from sides of the bowl. Attach a microwave thermometer.*

Microwave, *at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes until syrup reaches 149°C / 300°F. If not using thermometer, pour spoonful of syrup into cold water — it should form brittle threads.*

Quickly *stir in flavouring and matching food colouring. Pour into the moulds, covering the stick. Leave for about 1 hour or until set. Wrap in stretch wrap; store in a cool, dry place.*

RAY DUNS

Fish Finger Wigwam

Fish finger wigwam

20½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

Suitable for over twos

500-700g / 1¼-1½lb floury potatoes, diced
45ml / 3tbls water, plus 5ml / 1tsp
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
75g / 3oz frozen mixed vegetables, thawed
8 fish fingers
100g / 4oz frozen peas
1 tomato, cut into 8 wedges

SERVES 3-4

1 Microwave the potatoes with 45ml / 3tbls water in a covered casserole at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes. Leave to stand for 3 minutes, then drain and mash with butter or margarine.
2 Stir the thawed mixed vegetables into the mashed potato, mixing thoroughly.
3 Pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Add the fish fingers, pressing them down well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes, turning them over after half the cooking time.
4 Microwave the peas with 5ml / 1tsp water in a small, covered bowl at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring once; drain.
5 Meanwhile, mould the potato mixture in the centre of a round serving dish and stand the fish fingers against the sides of the potato. Place a tomato wedge between each fish finger.
6 Spoon the peas around the edge of the dish, then reheat the assembled dish at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes until well heated through. Serve at once.

Fruity rice pudding

20 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Suitable for over ones

40g / 1½oz ground rice
25g / 1oz sugar
575ml / 1pt milk

APRICOT PURÉE
100g / 4oz dried apricots
15ml / 1tbls runny honey

MAKES 575ml / 1pt

1 To make the purée, place the apricots in a deep 1.4L / 2½pt bowl and add boiling water to cover. Cover the bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.
2 Stir in the honey, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for a further 3-4 minutes, or until the apricots are soft. Cool slightly.
3 Purée the apricots with a little of the cooking liquid in a blender, adding more liquid if necessary to reach desired consistency.
4 Make the rice pudding: stir together the rice, sugar and milk in a 2.8L / 5pt casserole.
5 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir well. Microwave for a further 3 minutes. Stir well.
6 Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for 10-12 minutes or until the rice mixture is thickened, stirring every 3 minutes.
7 Stand for 5 minutes. Serve warm, with the apricot purée swirled through.

Freezer notes

Cool the rice pudding covered to prevent a skin forming. Once cooled, pack pudding and purée separately. Freeze up to 3 months.

Thaw purée at 20-30% (Defrost) for 3½-4½ minutes; stir once. Thaw pudding at 20-30% (Defrost) for 8-10 minutes; stir twice. To reheat, add a little milk if necessary. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes. Stand 1 minute.

Sweet pastry flans

Microwave a cooked pastry flan case — so marvellously versatile that you will never be short of a dessert or a teatime treat. Whatever filling you choose, sweet flans are easy as pie.

Microwave a flan case and a wealth of memorable desserts and teatime specials is just waiting for you to explore. Whatever filling you choose, microwaving makes it easy. Even the simplest of cold fillings (such as that for the strawberry flan) can be enhanced by a layer of cream cheese, cunningly softened for spreading in the microwave.

Prepare the flan case according to the recipe in Part 14, page 370. It is worth making several at a time and freezing the surplus (see Freezer note, page 1382). Don't be tempted to microwave fillings in raw pastry cases — the pastry will simply become soggy. Allow the cooked case to cool before filling to prevent it from absorbing too much moisture.

Iced Bakewell Tart

DON LAST

French strawberry flan

1¾ mins

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370)

FILLING

225g / 8oz cream cheese
60ml / 4tbls caster sugar
450g / 1lb strawberries, washed and hulled
340g / 12oz jar strawberry conserve

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the cream cheese in a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds, or until just soft and easy to stir. Beat in the sugar until light and fluffy.

2 Spread the cream cheese evenly over the base of the flan. Arrange the strawberries on top, pressing them gently into the soft cream cheese.

3 Turn the conserve into a large bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 1¼-1¾ minutes, or until hot and bubbly, stirring once. Pass through a fine nylon sieve, then spoon evenly over the strawberries to glaze the flan. Chill for 30 minutes before serving.

Iced Bakewell tart

8½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370), made with wholewheat flour

FILLING

45ml / 3tbls strawberry jam
2 eggs, separated
75g / 3oz fresh white breadcrumbs
75g / 3oz caster sugar
50g / 2oz butter, softened
75g / 3oz ground almonds
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
pinch of salt

ICING

225g / 8oz icing sugar, sifted

French Strawberry Flan

Microtips

Flans and open pies with a high fat and sugar content, such as Shoofly pie, must not be left unattended at any stage during microwaving time. Their rich, sugary fillings attract microwave energy and can burn.

Cook's notes

If the filling is very runny, 'waterproof' the pastry by brushing the case with a little lightly beaten egg white after removing the absorbent paper. Return the case to the microwave for the final 2-3 minutes.

water to mix
15ml / 1tbls cocoa powder

SERVES 6

1 Spread the jam over the base of the cold pastry case.
2 Mix together the egg yolks, breadcrumbs, sugar, butter, ground almonds and lemon zest and juice.
3 Whisk the egg whites with a pinch of salt until just stiff. Fold into the almond mixture and spread evenly over the jam.
4 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 7 minutes, giving dish a quarter turn every 2 minutes. Increase power to 100% (High) and microwave for 1½-2 minutes, until just set and firm in the middle. Stand for 3 minutes. Leave until cold.
5 Mix icing sugar with 22.5-30ml / 4½-6tsp of water to make a flowing icing. Set aside 30ml / 2tbls of the icing and spread the remaining icing evenly over the cooked tart.
6 Mix the cocoa powder with the reserved icing and a little water and, while the white icing is still soft, drizzle the chocolate icing across the top in lines. Draw a cocktail stick across the chocolate lines at even intervals, to give a feathered effect; wipe the stick clean after each stroke.

Swiss fudge flan

5½ mins

Standing time: none

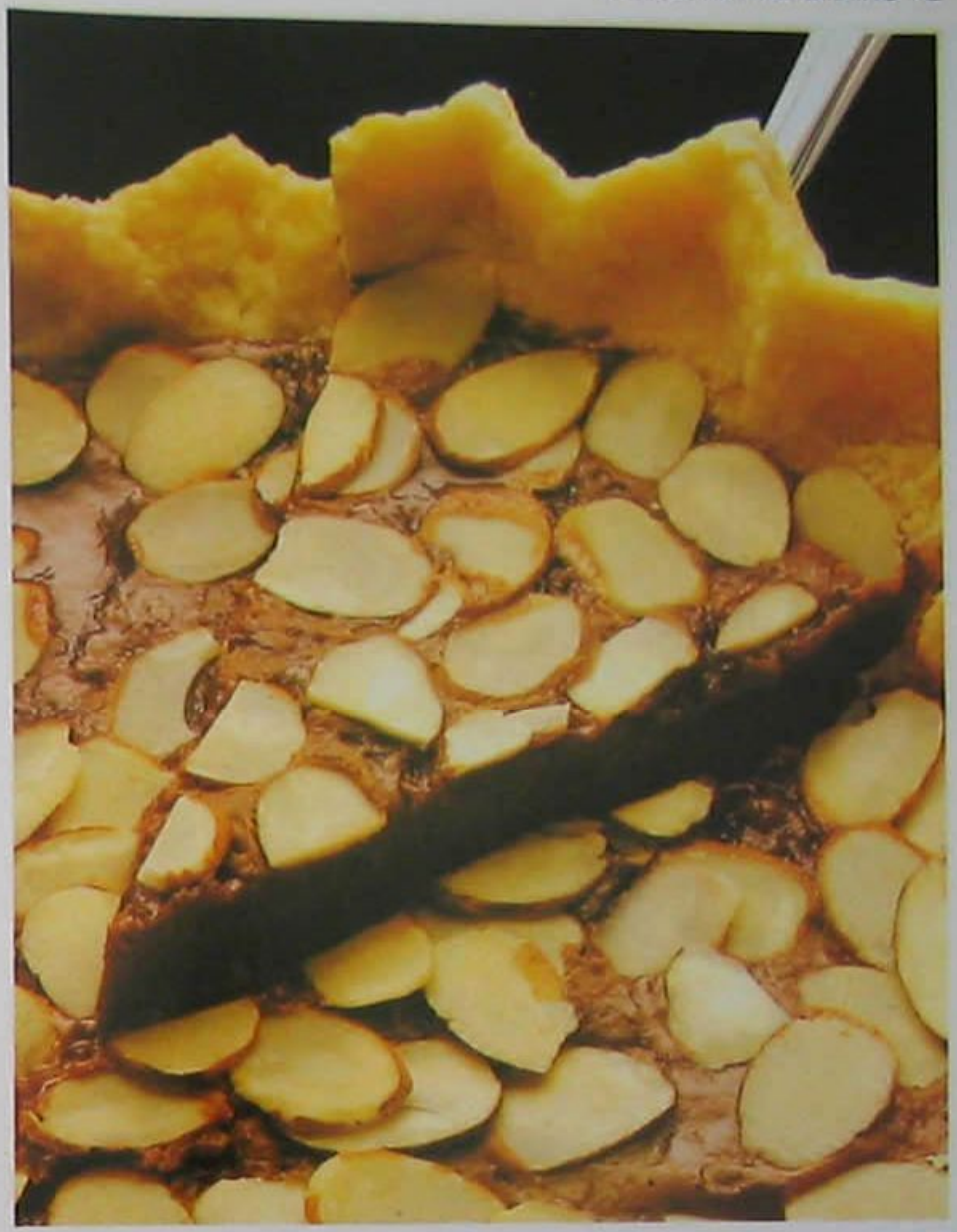
23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370)

FILLING
400g / 14.1oz can sweetened condensed milk
175g / 6oz plain chocolate chips
40g / 1½oz flaked almonds

SERVES 8

VARIATIONS
Walnut fudge pie: substitute coarsely chopped walnuts for the almonds and microwave in the same way.

White chocolate flan: use white chocolate broken into very small pieces instead of chocolate chips.



How to microwave Swiss fudge flan

Microwave *the condensed milk at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, or until hot then stir in the chocolate chips. If they do not melt, microwave at 100% (High) for a further 30 seconds.*

Spread *the chocolate mixture evenly in the pastry case. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes. Sprinkle on the almonds. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until firm.*

Shoofly pie

11½ mins

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370)

FILLING

150g / 5oz plain flour, sifted
100g / 4oz light soft brown sugar
5ml / 1tsp ground cinnamon or mixed spice
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
pinch of salt
75g / 3oz butter, cut into small pieces
175ml / 6fl oz water
60ml / 4tbls molasses or black treacle
5ml / 1tsp baking powder

SERVES 6

Freezer notes

Cooked unfilled pastry cases freeze well for up to 6 months. Open-freeze, then remove from the dish, pack in a rigid container (to prevent damage during storage) and return to the freezer.

To use, unpack and place on a plate. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1 minute, giving a half turn once. Stand for 2 minutes.

How to microwave Shoofly pie

Mix *the flour, sugar, spices and salt and either beat or rub in the butter until crumbly. Place a third of the crumb mixture in the cooked pastry case.*

Microwave *water at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes to boil. Mix in molasses and baking powder. Pour half over crumbs. Add second third of crumbs and remaining liquid.*

Add *remaining crumbs. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes. Turn once then microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes until dry and just springy to touch. Serve warm or cold.*

Triple-layer citrus pie

9 mins

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370)

FILLING
350g / 12oz caster sugar
90ml / 6tbls cornflour*
500ml / 18fl oz water
3 egg yolks, lightly beaten
5ml / 1tsp grated lemon zest
5ml / 2tbls lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp grated lime zest
30ml / 2tbls lime juice
2 drops of green food colouring
5ml / 1tsp grated orange zest
30ml / 2tbls orange juice
2 drops of orange food colouring

MERINGUE
3 egg whites
175g / 6oz caster sugar

SERVES 6-8

1 Mix the sugar, and cornflour and gradually add the water, blending until smooth.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-8 minutes, stirring several times until thick.
3 Stir a little hot mixture into the egg yolks, then stir back into the bowl. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes, stirring twice until thick. Divide into three equal portions in smaller bowls. Add lemon zest and juice to one, lime zest, juice and colouring into the second and orange zest, juice and colouring into the third, beating well. Cover the surfaces of the lime and orange mixtures closely.
4 Spread lemon filling in pastry case. Chill for an hour to set. Add the lime filling, chill for an hour, then add orange filling.
5 To make the meringue, whisk the egg whites until they stand in stiff peaks. Gradually whisk in sugar until stiff and glossy. Spread over the filling, right to the edges. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 3-6 minutes, or until set, giving a quarter turn once. If liked, brown meringue under grill.

* AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use 4½ tablespoons cornflour.

Cherry and kirsch pie

2 mins

Standing time: none

23cm / 9in cooked pastry case (see Part 14, page 370)

FILLING
425g / 15oz can stoned red cherries
150ml / ¼pt natural apple juice
10ml / 2tsp arrowroot
5ml / 1tsp lemon juice
275ml / ½pt double cream
30ml / 2tbls kirsch
chopped nuts or grated lemon zest, to decorate

SERVES 6

1 Drain cherry juice. Make up to 225ml / 8fl oz with apple juice.
2 Mix the arrowroot with a little of the liquid, add the lemon juice then stir into the rest of the cherry and apple juice. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until thickened and clear, stirring once.
3 Mix cherries into thickened mixture, cool, then pour into the pastry case. Chill well.
4 Whip cream and kirsch until it stands in soft peaks. Pipe around the pie, sprinkle with nuts or lemon zest, then refrigerate before serving.

Above: *Triple-Layer Citrus Pie*
Below: *Cherry and Kirsch Pie*

Microwaving kidneys

Wholesome and nourishing, yet inexpensive, kidneys are easy to microwave. Serve them sizzling hot for brunch, turn into a tasty pilaff, or make them into a savoury pudding for a warming family supper.

Kidneys can be cooked simply and quickly in the microwave and are just as delicious as when cooked conventionally.

Of the three varieties normally available — lambs', ox and pigs' — lambs' kidneys are the most popular and versatile. These have the mildest flavour and are the best choice for simple dishes, where a delicate flavour is required. Pigs' kidneys have a stronger flavour and a less tender texture; they are best used in pâtés and for stews. Ox kidneys have the most robust taste of all and are best in casseroles and stews. Ox and pigs' kidneys are prepared in the same way as lambs' kidneys.

Since lambs' kidneys are tender, they can be cooked quickly at

Devilled Kidney Kebabs

100% (High) power. For some recipes, a browning dish gives the best results, as it sears and browns the meat. For kebabs, a browning dish is not necessary — simply baste with soy or Worcestershire sauce before and during cooking to add colour and flavour. Casseroles and pilaffs can also be made without a browning dish, but if you are keen on a brown appearance, brown the prepared and sliced kidneys conventionally in a frying pan before microwaving. Because they are less tender, pigs' and ox kidneys require slower, more gentle cooking.

Devilled kidney kebabs

9 mins

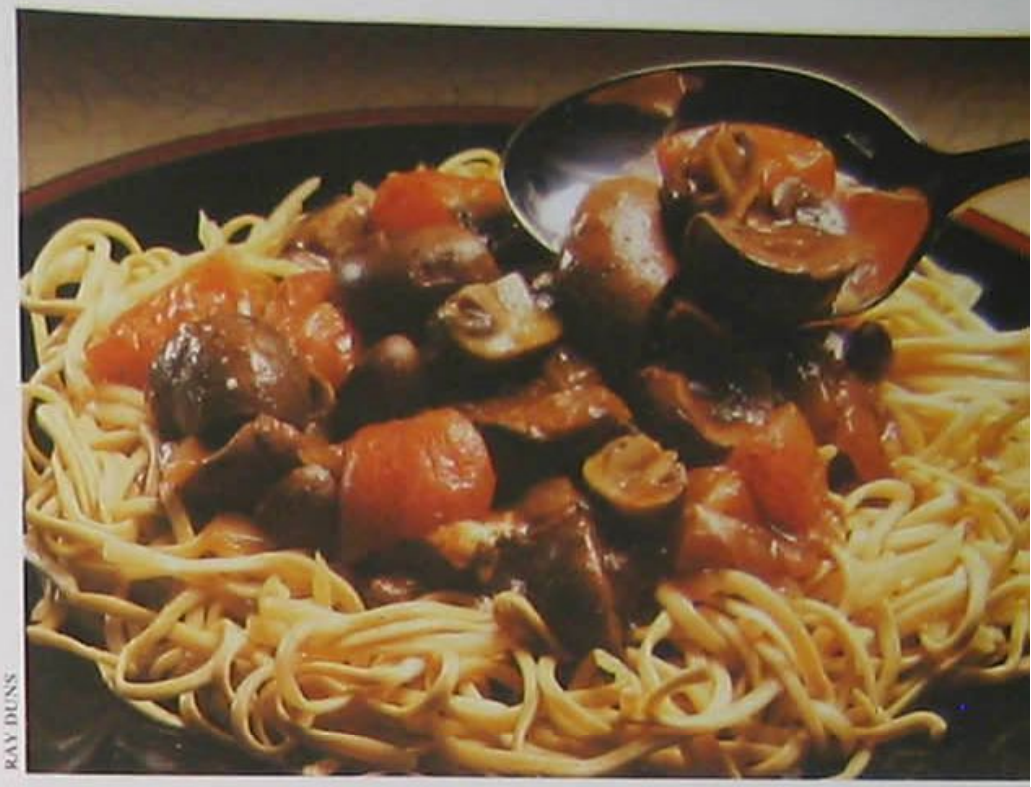
Standing time: 3 mins

8 rashers smoked streaky bacon, rinds removed
1 small red pepper
1 small green pepper
4 large mushrooms, stalks removed, halved
8 lambs' kidneys, skinned, halved and cored
salt and pepper to taste

BASTING SAUCE
10ml / 2tsp tomato ketchup or sauce
10ml / 2tsp Worcestershire sauce
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil

SERVES 4

1 Stretch the bacon rashers with the back of a knife until they are double in length, then roll up each piece. Cut each pepper into 8 equal-sized pieces, discarding the seeds and membrane.
2 Thread the mushrooms, bacon rolls, pepper pieces and kidney on to 8 wooden skewers.
3 Arrange the kebabs on a microwave roasting tray or on a rack placed in a dish. Season to taste.
4 Mix the ingredients for the basting sauce together and brush over the kebabs. Microwave at 100% (High) for 9-10 minutes, or until kidneys are cooked, rearranging, turning and basting the kebabs every 3 minutes. Stand for 3 minutes. Serve on rice with cooking juices poured over.



RAY DUNN

Kidney Casserole

Kidney casserole

22 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

40g / 1½oz butter
1 large onion, chopped
575g / 1¼lb lambs' kidneys, skinned, quartered and cored
75ml / 3fl oz beef stock (made with ½ cube)
45ml / 3tbls dry sherry
15ml / 1tbls tomato purée or paste
pepper
1 bouquet garni
175g / 6oz button mushrooms, halved
4 tomatoes, skinned and chopped
30ml / 6tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls cold water
150ml / ¼pt soured cream

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the butter and onion in a large casserole, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, or until the onion is soft.
2 Add the kidneys, cover and microwave for a further 3 minutes.
3 Mix the stock, sherry, tomato purée and pepper to taste. Pour over the kidneys. Add the bouquet garni and stir well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
4 Add the mushrooms and tomatoes and microwave, covered, for a further 8-10 minutes, or until the kidneys are tender, stirring twice during cooking. Remove the bouquet garni.
5 Blend the cornflour to a smooth paste with the water and stir into the casserole. Microwave, uncovered, for 3-4 minutes or until the sauce has thickened and is bubbling hot.
6 Stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Just before serving, swirl in the soured cream. Serve with noodles, cooked conventionally.

VARIATION
To use pigs' or ox kidney in place of the lambs' kidney, reduce power to 50% (Medium) at stage 2 and microwave for 5-7 minutes; for 7 minutes at stage 3; 15-18 minutes at stage 4, and 5 minutes at stage 5. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

Freezer notes

To thaw 575g / 1¼lb of pigs' or ox kidneys, place in a bowl, cover and microwave at 30% (Defrost) for 9-11 minutes. Turn kidneys frequently. Stand for 1-2 minutes.

Kidney pilaff

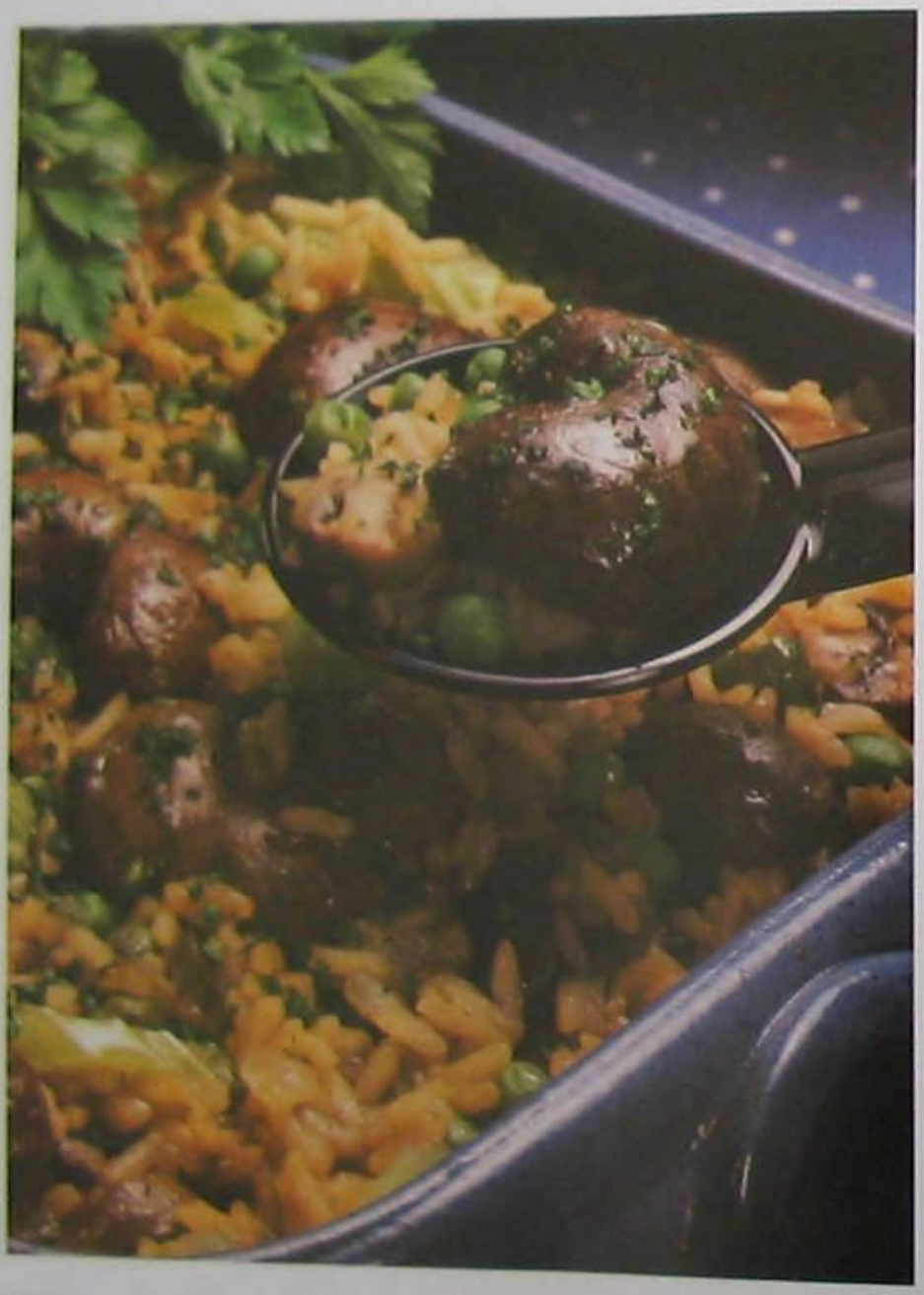
20 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

50g / 2oz butter, cut into quarters
1 onion, chopped
2 celery stalks, thinly sliced
450g / 1lb lambs' kidneys, skinned, halved, cored and cut into small pieces
175g / 6oz long-grain rice
275ml / ½pt beef stock (made with ½ cube)
pepper
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
100g / 4oz frozen peas
chopped parsley to garnish

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the butter, onion and celery in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until onion is soft.
2 Stir in the kidneys, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Add the rice, stock and pepper to taste and stir well. Cover and microwave for a further 5 minutes.
3 Add the mushrooms and peas and stir well. Cover and continue to microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, or until the rice is tender, stirring twice.
4 Let stand for 10 minutes then garnish with a sprinkle of chopped parsley.
5 Serve with grilled tomatoes and a mixed salad.



Kidney pudding

34 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz pigs' kidney, skinned, halved, cored and cubed
225g / 8oz lean braising steak, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes
30ml / 2tbls plain flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
15ml / 1tbls vegetable oil
25g / 1oz butter
1 onion, finely chopped
150ml / ¼pt beef stock (made with ½ cube)

SUET PASTRY
75g / 3oz self-raising flour
a pinch of salt
a pinch of turmeric
40g / 1½oz shredded suet or white vegetable margarine
2.5ml / ½tsp dried mixed herbs
45-60ml / 3-4tbls cold water

SERVES 4-6

1 Prepare the filling; toss kidney and steak in flour.
2 Pre-heat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add the oil and butter, then kidney, steak and onion. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until meat is browned, stirring once.
3 Add stock and stir well. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 18-20 minutes, or until meat is tender. Stand for 5 minutes.
4 Meanwhile, make pastry: sift flour, salt and turmeric into a bowl. Add the suet and the herbs. Pour in water and, using the blunt edge of a knife, stir to form a soft dough.
5 Place the meat in a 1.0L / 1¾pt pudding basin. Roll out the dough mix to fit inside top of basin.
6 Cover the basin loosely with stretch wrap, leaving room for the pastry to rise during cooking. Microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, or until the surface of the pastry is dry and risen, giving the dish a quarter turn three times.

Left: *Kidney Pilaff*
Above right: *Kidney Pudding*

How to microwave lambs' kidneys

Remove *the fat encasing kidney. Pinch each kidney between your thumb and finger, then lift up the soft, thin outer skin and discard it.*

Cut *each kidney in half lengthways. With kitchen scissors, cut out the core of white fat. Calculate cooking time allowing 4 minutes per 100g / 4oz.*

Microtips

A browning dish gives kidneys a seared finish.

When using a browning dish, always check with your microwave manufacturer's handbook. Never pre-heat the dish longer than the recommended time as this can damage the glass turntable or glass plate cooker base. Some manufacturers recommend placing the browning dish on an upturned heatproof glass plate or special microwave trivet.

ANDREW WHITTUCK

Pre-heat *a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add 5ml / 1tsp vegetable oil, then the kidneys.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Turn kidneys over and microwave for remaining cooking time, turning and rearranging once.*

Check *that the kidneys are cooked by piercing with a sharp knife — the juices should run clear. Leave to stand, covered, for 3 minutes.*

RAY DUNS

Stir-fried kidneys

13 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

5ml / 1tsp vegetable oil
450g / 1lb lambs' kidneys, skinned, quartered and cored
1 small onion, cut in 8 wedges
2 large carrots, cut into matchstick strips
75g / 3oz broccoli, trimmed and broken into florets
75g / 3oz French beans
15ml / 1tbls soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls beef or lamb stock
1.5ml / ¼tsp sugar
salt and pepper
75g / 3oz beansprouts, soaked in water and drained

SERVES 4-6

1 Preheat a browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add the oil, then immediately add the kidneys and onion. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.

2 Stir in the carrots. Cover with the lid and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Stir in the broccoli and beans.

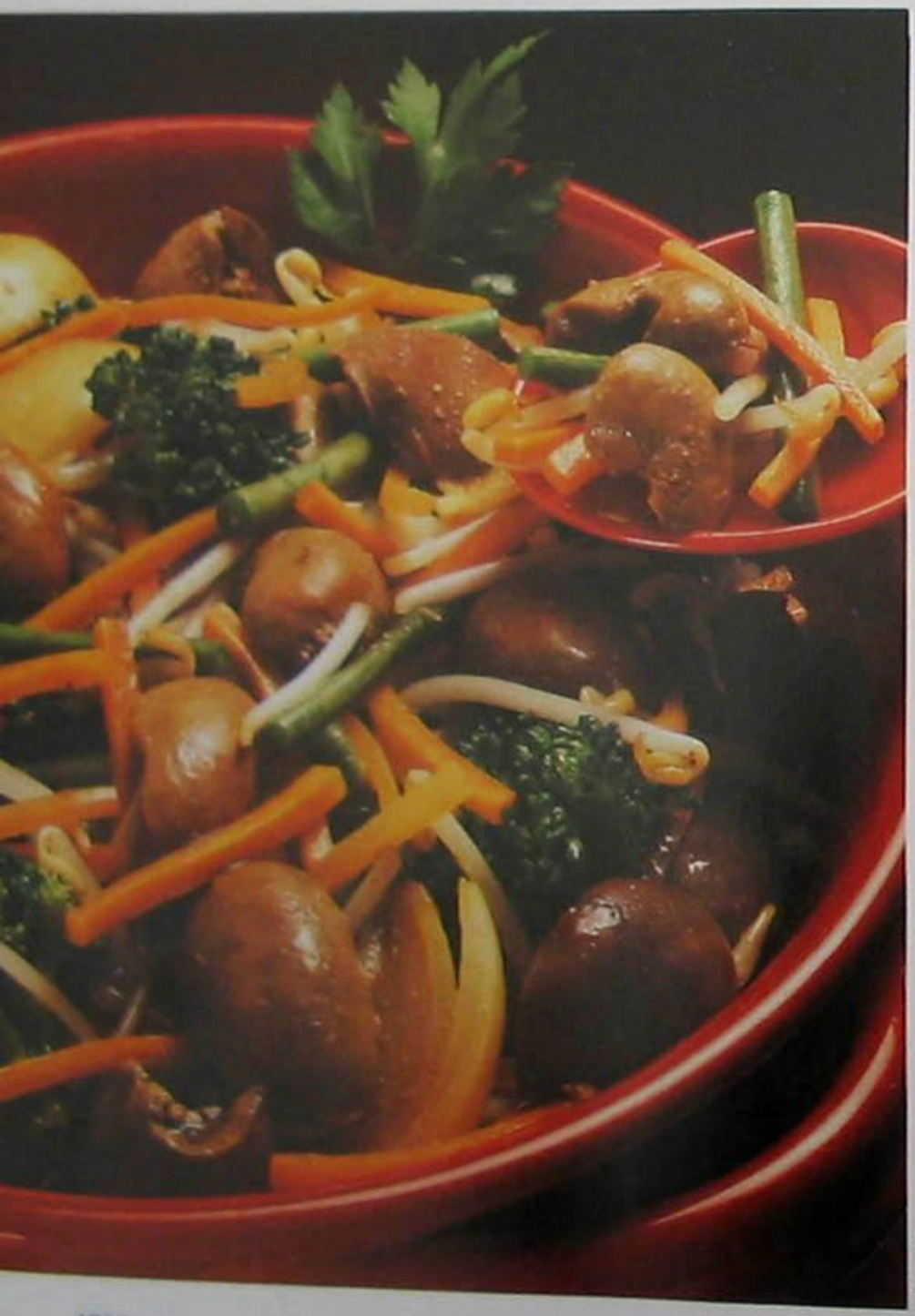
3 Mix together the soy sauce, stock, sugar and salt and pepper and pour over the kidneys and vegetables. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, or until the vegetables are just tender, stirring once.

4 Add the beansprouts and mix well. Cover and microwave for a further 1-2 minutes, or until heated through. Stand for 5 minutes before serving.

VARIATIONS

Use sprigs of cauliflower instead of the broccoli florets and replace the carrots with 1 large red pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips.

Stir-fried Kidneys



RAY DUNS

Kidney brunch

10 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

2 pork chipolata sausages, pricked
2 lambs' kidneys, skinned, halved and cored
2 rashers bacon, rinds removed
1 large tomato, halved

SERVES 2

1 Preheat a browning dish for 5 minutes at 100% (High) or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add the sausages and microwave at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, turning them over every 30 seconds.

2 Add the kidneys. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes. Turn kidneys and sausages once.

3 Add the bacon and tomato and cook for a further 2-2½ minutes, turning all the food once. Cover with the lid and stand for 3 minutes. Serve with hot toast.

Microtips

The Kidney Brunch may splatter during cooking. You can prevent this by covering the dish with its lid, but the finished dish will be slightly less firm.

Stuffed roast chicken

Roast chicken with a moist, flavoursome stuffing is a favourite treat for the whole family. Use your microwave and have a satisfying dinner in under 45 minutes.

Everyone enjoys a whole roasted chicken either for a family meal or special occasion dinner. Tasty stuffings and glazes enhance the flavour of the chicken and help to keep it moist and succulent. Cook the chicken in your microwave, add accompanying vegetables and you have a quick satisfying meal.

The cooking time varies slightly according to the shape and size of the chicken, so it is essential to test that it is thoroughly cooked. Pierce the flesh just behind the thigh where the meat is very thick. The juices should run clear with no trace of pinkness. The legs should also move freely. If the chicken isn't done, return it to the microwave for 1-2 minutes more.

Since the stuffing recipes given

Chicken with Herb Stuffing

here are pre-cooked or cook quickly, weigh the bird before stuffing to calculate the cooking time. Otherwise you may find that the chicken is overdone. Allow 6-9 minutes per 450g / 1lb.

Do not pack the stuffing in too tightly, but allow some room for it to swell. Once the chicken is stuffed, tie the legs and wings with string. This helps it to maintain a good shape and to cook evenly. Since chicken does not brown evenly in the microwave, you may want to use a glaze or browning agent to achieve an oven-roasted appearance, such as the glazes on page 1391.

Place the chicken, breast uppermost, on a roasting rack or in a large dish. Check to make sure that it is cooking evenly, particularly on the underside. A large bird may need to be turned over to finish, and you should rotate the dish during cooking. If chicken splatters, cover loosely with greaseproof paper.

After draining, tent with foil, shiny side in, and stand for 10-12 minutes. Test and microwave for 1-2 minutes more if necessary.

Microtips

Any reserved stuffing can be microwaved in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or until heated through, while chicken stands.

Microwave times for roasting chicken

WEIGHT OF CHICKEN	TIME AT 100% (HIGH)*	PROCEDURE
1kg / 2lb	12 – 16 mins	Check halfway through cooking. Turn dish. Stand 10 mins.
1.5kg / 3lb	18 – 24 mins	Check two-thirds through cooking. Turn dish. Stand 10-12 mins.
1.8kg / 4lb	25 – 36 mins	Check and turn over after 20 mins. Stand 12 mins.

*Times are a guide; test for doneness at the end of minimum recommended cooking time and again after standing. Return chicken to microwave for 1-2 minutes at 100% (High) if necessary, to finish.

Chicken with herb stuffing

23 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1.5kg / 3lb oven-ready chicken

STUFFING AND COATING

2.5ml / ½tsp grated lemon zest
5ml / 1tsp dried oregano
5ml / 1tsp dried sage
5ml / 1tsp dried marjoram
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 small onion, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter
100g / 4oz fresh breadcrumbs
salt and pepper
45ml / 3tbls milk
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley

SERVES 4

Cook's notes

To keep the flesh of a roasted chicken moist, do not prick the skin before cooking. Instead, prick it all over before leaving it to stand to allow any juices and fat to drain off. These juices from the chicken can be used to make a sauce or gravy.

How to microwave Chicken with herb stuffing

Mix *the lemon zest, dried herbs and garlic. Microwave onion and butter in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or until soft. Combine with breadcrumbs, half the herb mixture and milk. Season to taste.*

Loosen *and lift skin over breast of chicken. Rub remaining herb mixture under skin carefully to avoid tearing it. Stuff chicken loosely with breadcrumb mixture, but do not overfill it. Reserve any extra.*

Truss *chicken legs with string. Mix the parsley with pepper and sprinkle over the top. Place chicken, breast side up, on a roasting rack or in a shallow dish. Microwave at 100% (High) for 18-24 minutes; turn after 12 minutes.*

Check *underside after 15 minutes; turn over if not cooking evenly. Test leg at end of cooking time, it should move freely. Pierce thickest part of thigh: juices should run clear. Tent with foil; stand 10 minutes.*

Bacon-stuffed roast chicken

26½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1.5kg / 3lb oven-ready chicken

BACON STUFFING
5 rashers smoked bacon, rinds removed, diced
1 onion, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
50g / 2oz fresh breadcrumbs
salt and pepper

GLAZE
25g / 1oz butter
pinch of turmeric

SERVES 4

1 Put bacon in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until crisp. Remove bacon with slotted spoon; drain.
2 Place onion and celery in bacon fat and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, or until soft. Stir in parsley, breadcrumbs and bacon; season. Mix well and use to stuff the chicken.
3 Melt butter in a covered bowl for 30 seconds at 100% (High). Stir in turmeric.
4 Tie legs with string. Place, breast side up, on a roasting rack or in a large dish; brush with butter glaze.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 18-24 minutes. Turn after 12 minutes; check underside. Turn it over if not cooking evenly. Test.
6 Cover with foil; stand for 10 minutes. Test again.

Glazed chicken with rice

41 mins

Standing time: 15 mins

1.5kg / 3lb oven-ready chicken

RICE STUFFING
100g / 4oz long-grain rice
1 onion, finely chopped
275ml / ½pt water
30ml / 2tbls chopped fresh herbs, mixed or 15ml / 1tbls dried mixed herbs
salt and pepper to taste

GLAZE
grated zest and juice of 1 orange
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls cider vinegar
30ml / 2tbls raspberry jam
150ml / ¼pt red wine

SERVES 4

1 Put rice and onion in a large bowl. Stir in water, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes; stir in herbs and season.
2 Stuff chicken with rice. Tie legs with string. Place chicken, breast side up, on a roasting rack or in a large, rectangular dish.
3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 18-24 minutes. Turn a half turn after 12 minutes and check underside. Turn chicken over if necessary. Test at end of cooking time.
4 Tent chicken with foil. Stand for 10 minutes, test again.
5 Make glaze. Combine orange juice and zest, cornflour, vinegar, jam and wine. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes or until hot; stir.
6 Pour off juices from chicken and add to glaze. Microwave for a further 3 minutes, stirring once.
7 Heat remaining stuffing at 100% (High) for 1-2 minutes. Pour hot glaze over chicken. Serve with extra stuffing.

Above: *Glazed Chicken with Rice*
Left: *Bacon-stuffed Roast Chicken*

Farmhouse chicken

23 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1.5kg / 3lb oven-ready chicken

VEGETABLE STUFFING

1 small potato, peeled and diced
1 onion, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
5ml / 1tsp dried rosemary
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
salt and pepper
30g / 2oz fresh breadcrumbs
100g / 4oz mushrooms, chopped
1 small canned pimiento, chopped

SERVES 4

Festive roast chicken

23 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1.5kg / 3lb oven-ready chicken

CHESTNUT STUFFING

1 large onion, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
5ml / 1tsp dried sage
salt and pepper to taste
439g / 15.5oz can unsweetened chestnut purée
50g / 2oz fresh breadcrumbs
60ml / 4tbls brandy or sherry

SERVES 4

1 Put onion and butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir in the sage, salt and pepper and chestnut purée, mixing well. Add breadcrumbs and brandy.

2 Fill chicken with stuffing, reserving any extra (see Microtips, page 1390). Tie legs with string. Place chicken, breast side up, on a roasting rack or in a large dish.

3 Microwave at 100% (High) for 18-24 minutes. Turn after about 12 minutes and check underside of chicken. Turn over if it is not cooking evenly. Test for doneness at end of cooking time.

4 Cover chicken with foil; stand for 10 minutes.

VARIATION

For Crunchy nut stuffing, use 50g / 2oz ground almonds and 100g / 4oz finely-chopped mixed nuts instead of the chestnuts.

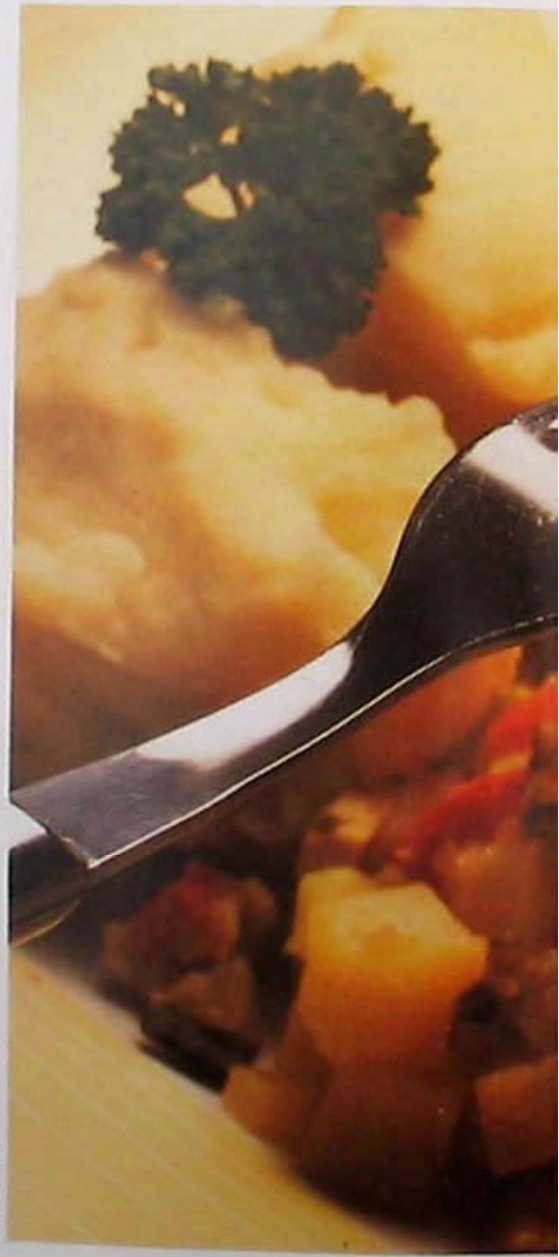
How to microwave Farmhouse chicken

Put *potato, onion and celery into a bowl with the garlic and rosemary. Add butter, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until all the vegetables are just tender.*

Stir *in salt and pepper, breadcrumbs, mushrooms and pimiento. Stuff chicken loosely: reserve extra stuffing. Tie chicken with string. Place on roasting rack or in large dish.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 18-24 minutes. Turn after 12 minutes and check underside. Turn chicken over if it is not cooking evenly. Test for doneness at end of cooking time.*

Tent *cooked chicken with foil, shiny side in. Stand 10 minutes. Microwave any reserved stuffing while chicken is standing (see Microtips, page 1390). Test chicken after standing.*



RAY DUNS

CHRIS KNAGGS

Chicken with fruity stuffing

24 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1.5kg / 3lb oven-ready chicken

FRUITY PORK STUFFING
115g / 8oz pork sausagemeat
1 onion, finely chopped
1 small cooking apple, peeled, cored and chopped
2.5ml / ½tsp ground mixed spice
30ml / 2tbls raisins
45ml / 3tbls fresh breadcrumbs
salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 4

1 Put sausagemeat in a bowl; break up. Add onion, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes. Stir once and drain.
2 Stir in apple, spice, raisins, and breadcrumbs; season. Mix well and stuff chicken loosely.
3 Tie chicken legs with string. Place on a roasting rack or dish.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 18-24 minutes. Turn after 12 minutes; check underside. Turn chicken over if not cooking evenly. Test.
5 Tent with foil; stand 10 minutes. Test again.

Above from left to right: *Chestnut, Crunchy nut and Fruity Pork stuffings* **Left:** *Farmhouse Chicken*

Vegetable main dishes

Capture all the goodness of vegetables by cooking them in the microwave — this way you can mix and match textures, colours and flavours to make mouthwatering main course dishes.

Main courses based on vegetables are appetizing, colourful — and good for you too. Vegetarian diets are increasingly popular these days and many people are reducing the amount of meat they eat. Thinking of a main course based on vegetables, not meat, can be difficult; the recipes here are sure to fit the bill — and give you an appetite for more.

Cooking vegetables by microwave is naturally healthy, using little water and retaining every ounce of goodness. Crisp textures and bright colours are captured to make the finished dish look and taste really special. As an extra bonus, cooking times are considerably reduced.

A vegetarian diet is perfectly healthy provided you eat a wide selection of foods and choose the less processed wholefoods, such as brown rice and pasta and wholemeal bread. Very strict vegetarians (Vegans) exclude all animal products (including eggs, milk, cheese and so on) from their diets and eat only plant foods. The majority of vegetarians include dairy products and eggs for protein; other useful sources of protein are nuts, seeds (such as sesame and sunflower seeds) and beans. Many vegetables contain a degree of protein too — so there is little danger of going short. Try the recipes here — and be prepared to be converted.

Courgette Quiche

DON LAST

Courgette quiche

18 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

Serve this deliciously light quiche with rice salad or baked potato and salad.

23cm / 9in cooked wholewheat pie case (see Part 4, page 87)
2 courgettes, thinly sliced
15ml / 1tbls water

FILLING
1 courgette, grated
225g / 8oz curd cheese
50g / 2oz Cheddar cheese, grated
100g / 4oz cottage cheese
2 eggs, beaten
15ml / 1tbls plain flour
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
1.5ml / ¼tsp garlic salt
pepper

SERVES 4-6

1 Combine all the filling ingredients in a large bowl and beat with a wooden spoon to blend thoroughly. Spoon into the pastry case and smooth over the top.
2 Microwave the sliced courgette and water in a covered bowl at 100% (High) for 2 minutes.
3 Arrange the slices on top of the filling. Place the pie dish on a saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 16-18 minutes, or until the centre is softly set. Rotate the dish a half turn every 3 minutes. Brown under the grill after microwaving, if wished.
4 Leave to stand for 5 minutes before serving hot or let cool.

Freezer notes

Quiches freeze well and this Courgette Quiche is no exception, taking next-to-no-time to thaw in the microwave. To freeze, wrap, label and freeze for up to 3 months.

To thaw and reheat, unwrap completely and microwave, uncovered, at 50% (Medium) for 2½-3 minutes, rotating half a turn once during microwaving. Leave to stand for 30-60 seconds before serving hot.

Gingered vegetables

12 mins

Standing time: 1-2 mins

Serve this Oriental dish over conventionally cooked or microwaved couscous (see Part 22, page 600), or brown rice if preferred.

340g / 12oz can asparagus tips and cuts, drained
450g / 1lb tofu, drained, rinsed and cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
225g / 8oz can sliced bamboo shoots, drained
3 spring onions, thinly sliced
45ml / 3tbls light soy sauce, or 30ml / 2tbls rich soy sauce, mixed with 15ml / 1tbls water
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
15ml / 1tbls white wine or water
1 garlic clove, crushed
10ml / 2tsp vegetable oil
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground ginger
pinch of cayenne pepper

SERVES 4

Gingered Vegetables

1 In a large casserole combine the asparagus, tofu, mushrooms, bamboo shoots and onions.
2 Blend the remaining ingredients in a small bowl and pour over the tofu and vegetable mixture, stirring to coat. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 12-14 minutes, or until the sauce thickens, stirring every 4 minutes. Stand for 1-2 minutes.

Cook's notes

Tofu (pronounced toe-fu) is made from soya beans and is very nutritious (high in protein, calcium and iron), but low in calories. It is sold in small blocks, loose or vacuum-packed, and only needs to be rinsed before use. Tofu is very bland; it does not need to be cooked, just reheated. Take care when stirring during microwaving not to break up the pieces of tofu as they are very soft.

Mediterranean Bake

Mediterranean bake

23 mins

Standing time: none

1 aubergine, halved and cut into 12mm / ½in slices
575ml / 1pt hot water
salt and pepper
1 egg
90ml / 6tbls fine breadcrumbs
2 courgettes, sliced diagonally
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan
1 small onion, sliced
1 green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
15ml / 1tbls olive oil
½ quantity Quick Tomato Sauce (see variation, page 1398)
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano

SERVES 4

1 Put the aubergine slices and water into a large bowl. Add 10ml / 2tsp salt and stir; soak for 5 minutes. Drain, turn into a clean teatowel; squeeze out moisture.
2 Beat the egg in a shallow dish. Spread 60ml / 4tbls of the crumbs on a plate. Season the aubergine slices. Dip in the egg, then coat with crumbs; arrange around the edge of a large plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-9 minutes until just tender, rotating twice.
3 Generously butter a 23cm / 9in pie dish. Coat sides and base with the remaining breadcrumbs.
4 Microwave the courgettes in a covered dish at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, stirring once; drain. Arrange around sides and base of pie dish. Sprinkle with Parmesan.
5 Combine onion, pepper, garlic and oil in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stir in sauce and herbs.
6 Spoon over courgettes and top with aubergine slices. Microwave at 100% (High) for 8-10 minutes; rotate twice. Stand 2 minutes; garnish with sliced black olives.

Tangy topped potatoes

16 mins

Standing time: 8-9 mins

To give the potatoes a crispy skin, place under the grill after standing time until browned.

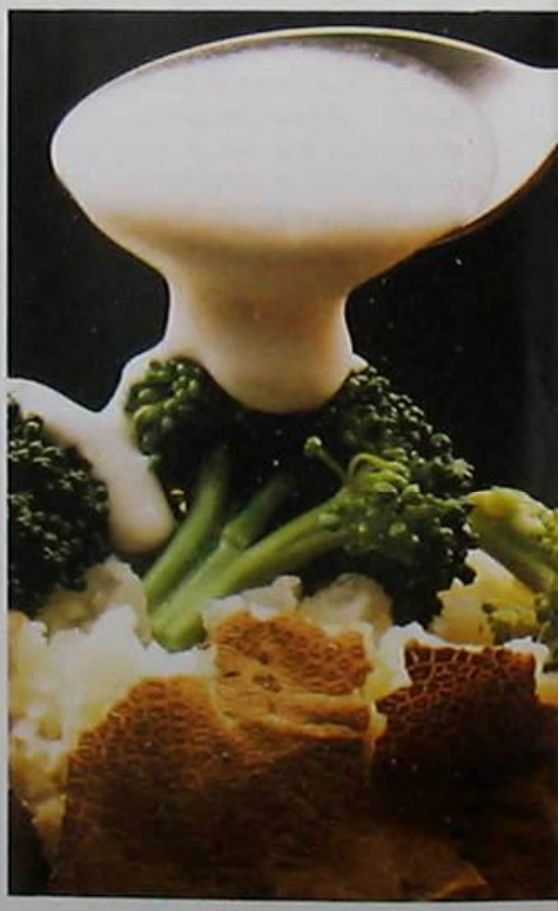
4 × 175g / 6oz baking potatoes, scrubbed and pricked
450g / 1lb broccoli florets
60ml / 4tbls water

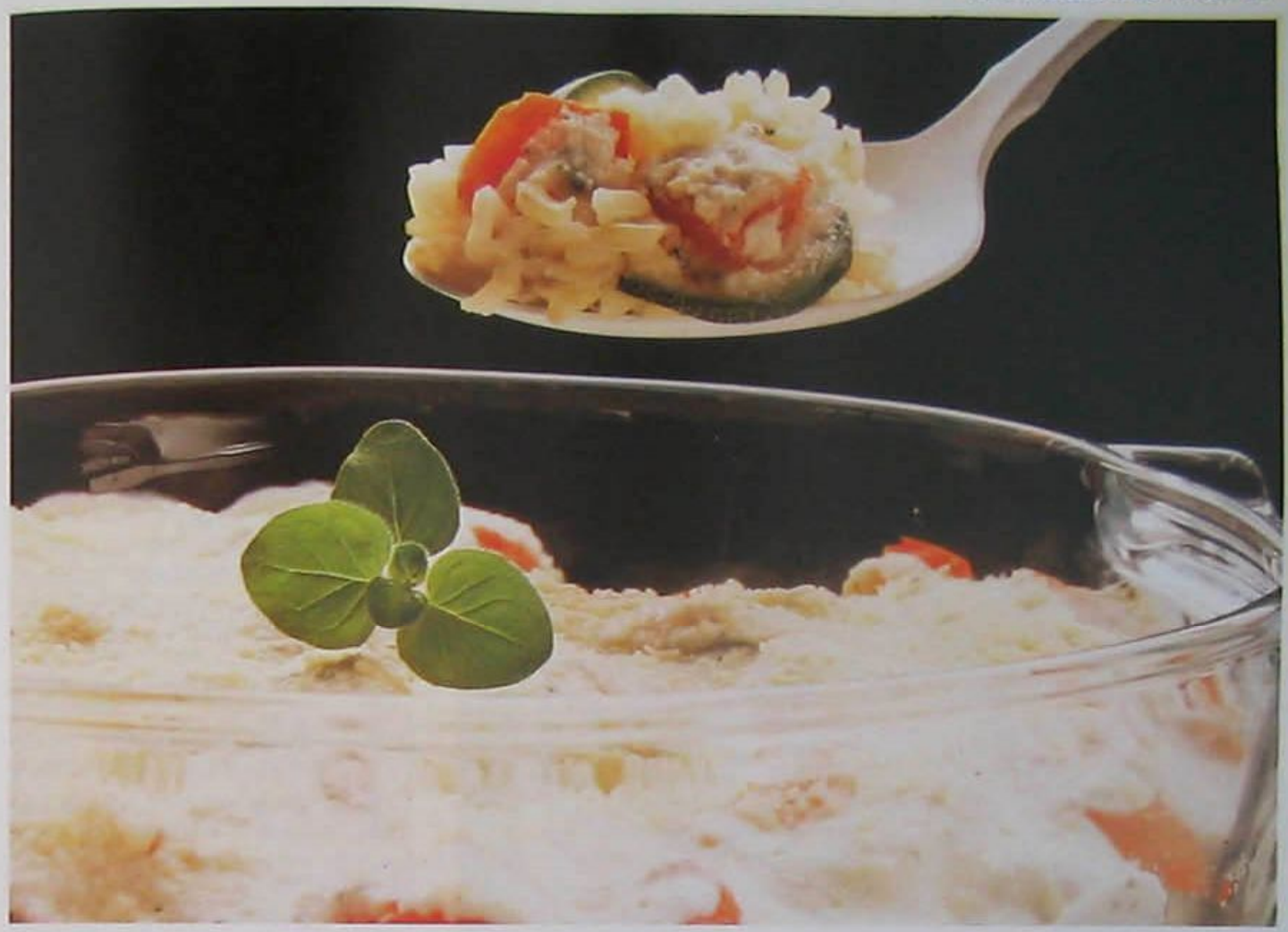
TANGY SAUCE
100g / 4oz Feta cheese, crumbled
60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt
1.5ml / ¼tsp lemon juice

SERVES 4

1 Arrange the potatoes around the edge of a plate, or on a piece of absorbent paper. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, turning once. Wrap in foil and stand for 5 minutes.
2 Arrange the broccoli in a dish with the florets to the centre of the dish. Add the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6-8

Tangy Topped Potatoes





minutes until tender-crisp, rotating dish a half turn once; drain. Stand, covered, for 3-4 minutes.
3 Meanwhile, combine the cheese, yoghurt and lemon juice in a blender and purée until smooth.
4 Cut a cross in the the top of each potato. Hold each potato in turn in a clean teatowel and squeeze gently to open out the cut. Top with broccoli, then spoon over the tangy sauce.

Tangy topped potatoes for two: halve all the ingredients. Microwave the potatoes for 5-6 minutes and the broccoli for 3-4 minutes. Stand as directed in recipe, then top and spoon over sauce.

Slimmer's notes

This makes a very nourishing light lunch or supper dish, at only 245Cal / 1030kJ per potato. Serve with a tomato salad.

Rice and vegetable bake

15 mins

Standing time: 1 min

A substantial and nutritious dish which will be a favourite with all the family.

225g / 8oz brown rice, cooked and cooled
100g / 4oz cottage cheese
100g / 4oz curd or ricotta cheese
60ml / 4tbls natural yoghurt
5ml / 1tsp dried basil
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried marjoram
2 large courgettes, thinly sliced
2 tomatoes, seeded and chopped
pepper
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
Quick tomato sauce (see recipe, page 1398) to serve

SERVES 4

1 Press half the rice lightly over the base of a round 1.1L / 2pt casserole.
2 Combine the cheeses, yoghurt, basil and marjoram in a food processor or blender and process until smooth. Alternatively, beat together with a wooden spoon until blended.
3 Top the rice with half the courgette and tomato slices and then half the cheese mixture. Repeat rice, vegetable and cheese layers. Sprinkle with Parmesan.
4 Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 15-17 minutes, or until the courgettes are tender crisp, rotating the dish a quarter turn twice. Let stand, covered, for 1 minute. Serve with Quick Tomato Sauce.

Rice and vegetable bake for two: halve all the ingredients except the curd cheese and layer in a 700ml / 1¼pt casserole. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 8-10 minutes in stage 4.

Quick tomato sauce

10 mins

Standing time: none

This zippy sauce is very versatile — try it with Rice and Vegetable Bake (page 1397) as well as quiches, egg and cheese dishes.

397g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
30ml / 2tbls tomato paste or purée
1 carrot, grated
½ small onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
10ml / 2tsp olive oil
salt and pepper to taste

MAKES 425ml / ¾pt

1 Combine all the ingredients in a large, deep bowl.
2 Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, until the sauce boils and the flavours are well blended. Stir twice during cooking.

VARIATION
To make half the quantity of Quick Tomato Sauce, use 227g / 8oz can tomatoes and halve all the other ingredients. Break up the tomatoes, combine with the other ingredients and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes

Spicy vegetable curry

16½ mins

Standing time: 3-4 mins

Choose the number of chillies depending on how 'hot' you like your food. Serve with boiled rice and poppadums.

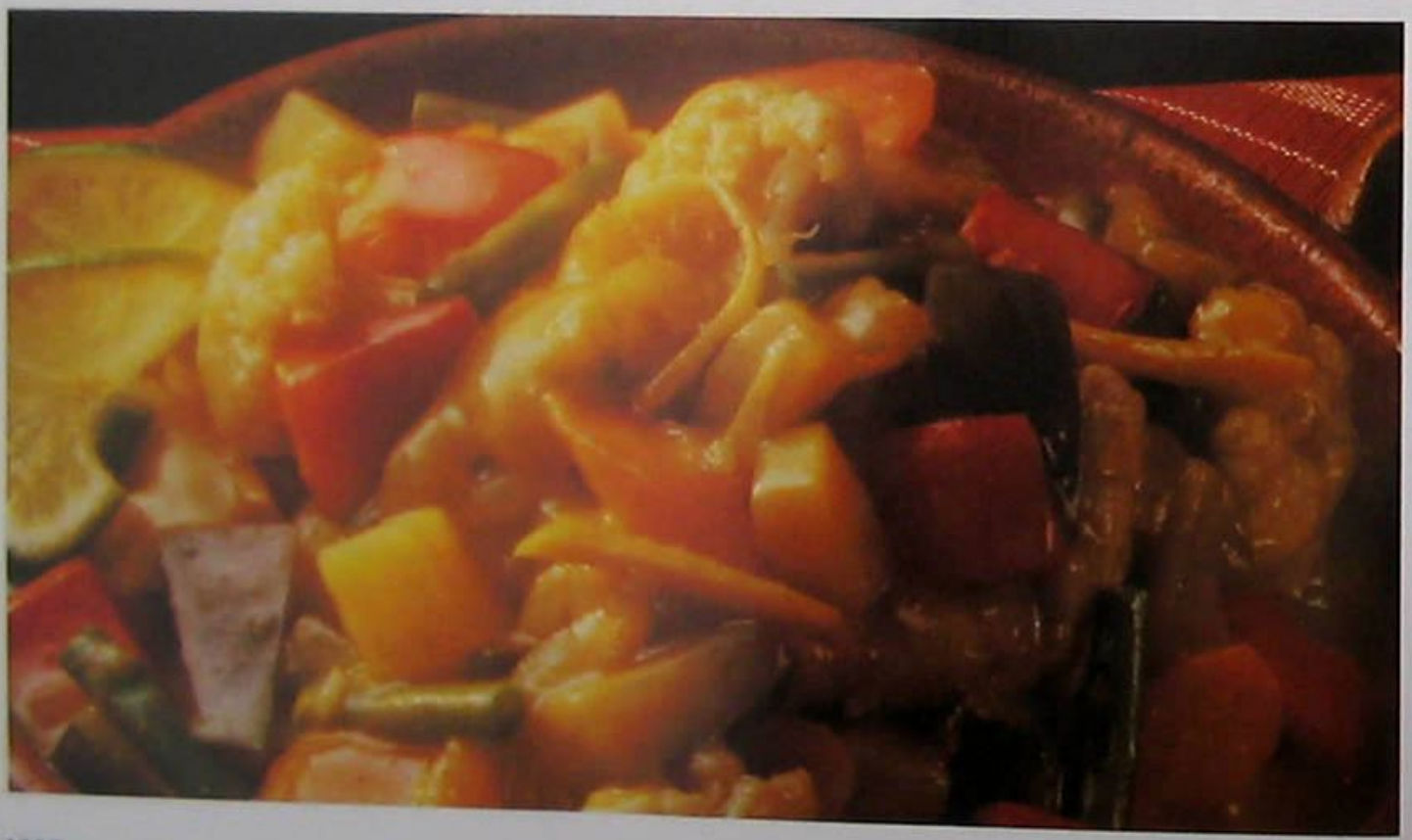
60ml / 4tbls vegetable oil
5cm / 2in piece fresh ginger, peeled and cut into slivers
2 garlic cloves, quartered
1 onion, sliced
1-3 red chillies, split, seeds removed
1 bay leaf
6 cardamom pods
5ml / 1tsp mild curry powder
1 carrot, sliced
100g / 4oz green beans, chopped
½ small cauliflower, cut into tiny florets
2 large potatoes, diced
575ml / 1pt vegetable stock
1 small aubergine, cut into 2.5cm / 1in strips
1 red pepper, seeded and chopped
salt and pepper
SERVES 6

Spicy Vegetable Curry

1 Place the oil, ginger and garlic in a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds. Stir in the onion and chillies. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, until the onion is tender, stirring once.
2 Stir in the bay leaf and spices, then add all the vegetables except the aubergine strips and pepper, tossing to coat. Stir in the stock, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes.
3 Stir in the aubergine and pepper. Cover and microwave for a further 8-10 minutes, or until all the vegetables are tender, stirring once.
4 Season to taste and stand, covered, for 3-4 minutes. Remove chillies before serving and garnish with slices of lime or orange, if liked.

Microtips

The flavour of this curry is even better if made in advance. You can prepare this dish the day before and keep it in the refrigerator. Reheat at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, or until piping hot.



Cheesy vegetable bake

24 mins

Standing time: 3 mins

This makes a really spicy dish, which is ideally accompanied by a crisp green salad.

1 large onion, finely chopped
1 small green pepper, finely chopped
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz can diced green chillies, drained (or mild fresh green chillies)
3 eggs, beaten
225g / 8oz cottage cheese, sieved
2.5ml / ½tsp dried oregano
1.5ml / ¼tsp ground cumin
salt and pepper
3 × 100g / 3.53oz packets tortilla or corn chips
225g / 8oz Emmental cheese, grated
175g / 6oz Cheddar cheese, grated
150ml / ¼pt soured cream

SERVES 6-8

VARIATION
For a milder flavour, use a 198g / 7oz can of sweetcorn kernels, drained, in place of the green chillies. Continue as in steps.

How to microwave Cheesy vegetable bake

Combine *onion, pepper and butter in a large casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes; stir in chillies. Blend eggs, cottage cheese and seasoning in separate bowl. Sprinkle one-third tortilla chips over base of a deep 30 × 20cm / 12 × 8in dish.*

Spoon *over half cottage cheese mixture. Spread over half the onion and pepper mixture; sprinkle with half the grated cheeses. Repeat chips, cottage cheese and onion layers. Cook at 100% (High) 5 minutes then at 50% (Medium) 12-15 minutes.*

Rotate *dish a quarter turn twice during cooking. Mix remaining grated cheeses with soured cream. Pour over and top with remaining chips. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes, rotating half a turn once. Stand for 3 minutes.*

Family celebration

A hearty, traditional, three course celebration meal is simplicity itself to prepare by microwave — it is as much of a treat to cook as it is to eat!

Using the microwave for meals such as this makes 'slaving over a hot stove' a thing of the past; both the cook and the kitchen can keep their cool by following the order of work in the Countdown.

You'll be surprised how much can be left almost to the last minute when you have made good use of the time before the meal to prepare. The trifle benefits from overnight soaking — the flavours mingle better the longer they are left. Leave the decoration until the afternoon before serving, though, for the whipped cream to be fresh. If serving the Rich Nut Pie, this can be finished in a previously cooked pastry case on the day of serving.

As the potatoes need no initial preparation, microwave them ready to reheat later in the day. The carrots are best left uncooked until just before the main course. Similarly, the bread is at its best if served while still warm from cooking. If the loaf has to be cooked in advance, individual slices can be reheated by microwave to serve with the starter but they dry and become stale very quickly.

Take care when microwaving the beef that you do not overcook it beyond the degree of doneness you like. To be really accurate, insert a microwave thermometer to check the internal temperature according to the recipe. The meat continues to cook while standing, so stop microwaving before the meat looks 'done' enough for your taste. It is better to return the beef to the microwave for a few minutes more than to have the meat overcooked.

Microtips

If you are using a microwave thermometer, insert it into the meat at the end of the minimum calculated cooking time. (The temperature will rise several degrees during standing time.) The temperatures are a guide to heat before standing:
Rare 50°C / 120°F
Medium 58°C / 135°F
Well done 66°C /150°F

Countdown

The previous day
Prepare, microwave and assemble the trifle, but do not add the cream or decorations. Place a piece of stretch wrap over the surface of the custard to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate overnight. If serving the nut pie, microwave and cool the pastry case. Store in an airtight container.

Early the same day
Microwave the avocado pâté and refrigerate in individual ramekins or in a single dish. Peel the carrots and shave into curls. Refrigerate in a sealed polythene bag. Microwave the potatoes according to the recipe and allow to cool completely. Keep covered in a cool place until required.

In the afternoon
Prepare the mixture for the savoury bread and set aside in the cooking dish in a cool place. Decorate the trifle with cream, cherries, and chocolate and return to refrigerator, if serving. Microwave the Rich Nut pie with its filling and set aside to cool completely. Garnish the avocado pâté and return to the refrigerator.

Two hours before the meal
Remove the carrots from the refrigerator. Microwave the beef and leave to stand, tented with foil. Microwave the savoury bread and stand for 5 minutes. Microwave the carrots and set aside, covered. Serve the pâté and the savoury bread — if liked serve the bread with extra butter.

While clearing the first course
Microwave the potatoes in their serving dish at 100% (High) for 2-4 minutes, or until hot through, stirring once to rearrange the pieces. Serve the beef with the potatoes and carrots.

Rolled rib roast

25 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1.1kg / 2½lb boned and rolled rib of beef

SERVES 4-6

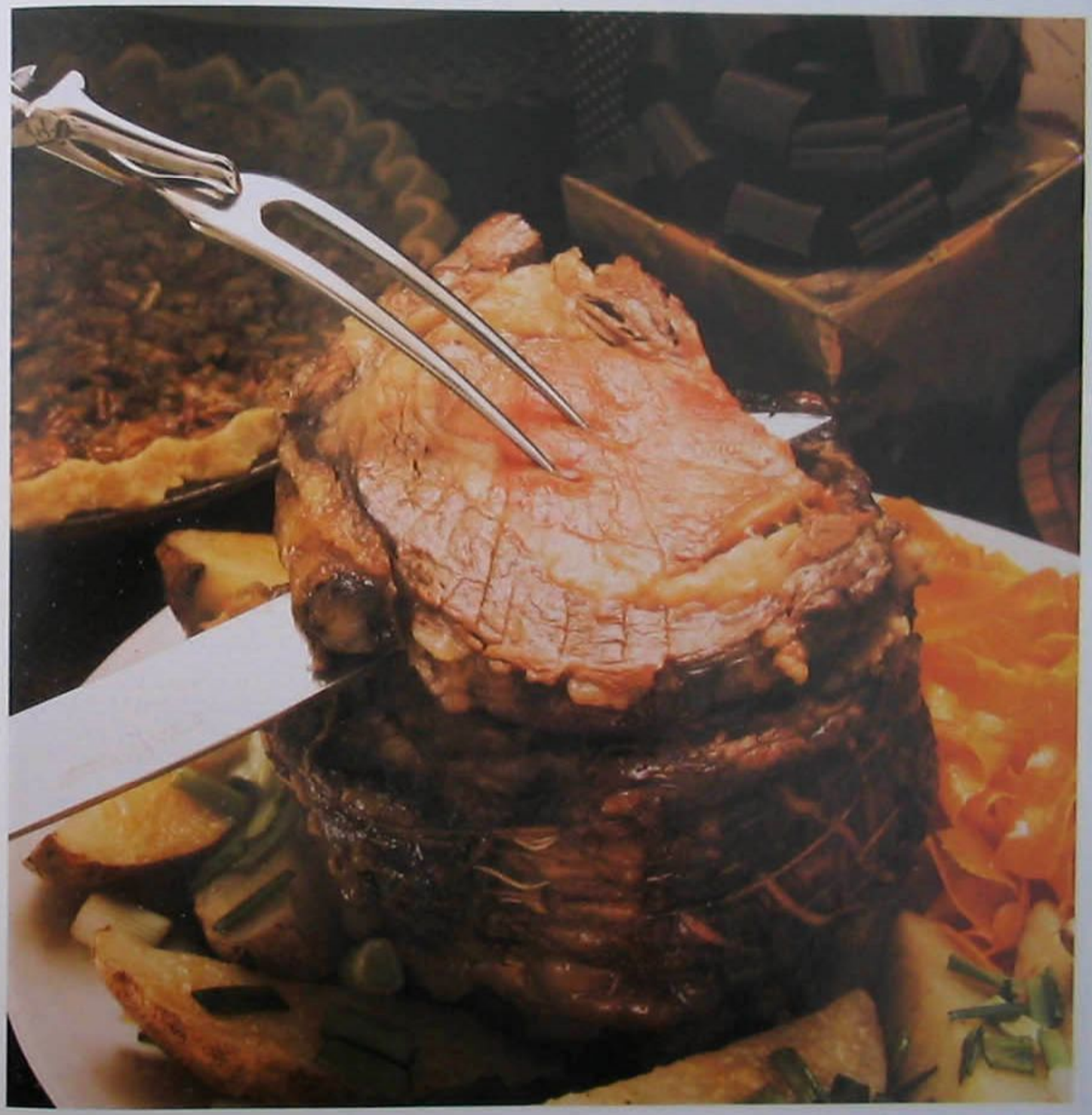
1 Calculate the required cooking time according to the weight. For rare meat, allow 10-13 minutes per 450g / 1lb; for medium cooked meat, 12-14 minutes, and for well done, 15-19 minutes.

2 Halve the total cooking time, then microwave the meat on a rack, fat side down, at 100% (High) for the first 8 minutes of this time. Reduce the power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for rest of the first half of time.

3 Turn the roast fat side up and microwave at 50% (Medium) for the second half of the time. Leave to stand under tented foil for 10 minutes to complete cooking.

Cook's notes

When selecting a rib of beef, pick meat which is not too fatty, but is well marbled with fat on the lean parts. Avoid meat which looks too dark or which is surrounded by fat which is very yellow — this is a sign of its being stale — as is any trace of unpleasant smell to the meat itself.



Avocado starter

2 mins

Standing time: none

15g / ½oz butter
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 avocados
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
dash of Tabasco sauce
salt and pepper to taste
15ml / 1tbls mayonnaise
100g / 4oz curd or full-fat soft cheese
pimiento and sprigs of flat leaf parsley to garnish

SERVES 4-6

1 Mix the butter and onion in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2 minutes, or until the onion is tender.
2 Halve and stone the avocados. Scoop out the flesh and press through a nylon sieve. Beat in lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco, salt and pepper and mayonnaise.
3 Place the curd or soft cheese in a bowl, cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 30-60 seconds, or until softened. Beat into the avocado mixture. Divide between four small ramekins or spread in a medium-sized soufflé dish. Cover closely and place in the refrigerator for 2-3 hours.
4 Garnish with pimiento and flat leaf parsley.

Onion caraway bread

10 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

30ml / 2tbls French onion soup mix
90g / 3½oz plain flour
90g / 3½oz wholewheat flour
225ml / 8fl oz milk
90g / 3½oz butter, melted
1 egg, beaten
30ml / 2tbls soft brown sugar
5-10ml / 1-2tsp caraway seeds
5ml / 1tsp baking powder
5ml / 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
pinch of salt

SERVES 4-6

1 Grease the base and sides of a 20 × 10cm / 8 × 4in loaf dish and coat with half of the soup mix.
2 Beat together all the remaining ingredients except the soup.
3 Spread evenly in the prepared dish and sprinkle the remaining soup mix over the top. Shield the corners with small, smooth pieces of well-secured foil.
4 Stand the dish on an inverted saucer and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 8 minutes, giving a quarter turn after 4 minutes. Remove the foil and increase the power to 100% (High) for a further 2-5 minutes, turning occasionally, until the top is just firm. Stand for 5 minutes in the dish, then turn out and serve warm.

Top: *Avocado Starter*
Below: *Onion Caraway Bread*

Buttered potato wedges

12¾ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

50g / 2oz butter or margarine
pepper
900g / 2lb floury potatoes, unpeeled and cut into quarters
45ml / 3tbls grated Parmesan cheese
6 spring onions, chopped

SERVES 4-6

1 Place the butter in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 45 seconds, or until hot and melted. Stir in pepper to taste.
2 Arrange the potato quarters in a large dish and brush with half of the butter mixture.
3 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Rearrange the pieces of potato and brush with the remaining butter mixture. Sprinkle the Parmesan and onions over the top, then cover and microwave for a further 7-10 minutes at 100% (High).
4 Leave to stand for 5 minutes; serve hot.

Carrot curls

3 mins

Standing time: none

5 large carrots
30ml / 2tbls water
50g / 2oz butter or margarine, cut in pieces
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
salt

SERVES 4-6

1 Shave the carrots lengthways into thin slices using a vegetable peeler. (The slices will curl slightly as they are cut.)
2 Mix the carrots with all the other ingredients, except the salt, in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, stirring after 2 minutes.
3 Stir in salt to taste, then drain and toss lightly with a fork before serving hot with the beef and potatoes.

Black Forest trifle

7 mins

Standing time: none

This trifle is based on the classic combination of chocolate cake, cherries, cream and liqueur.

1 chocolate whisked sponge cake (see Part 37, page 1025)
30-45ml / 2-3tbls cherry conserve
2 × 425g / 15oz cans stoned black cherries
45ml / 3tbls kirsch
275ml / ½pt whipping cream, whipped
chocolate squares, to decorate

CUSTARD
30ml / 2tbls sugar
40ml / 8tsp cornflour
275ml / ½pt milk
2 egg yolks, beaten
15g / ½oz butter
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring
50g / 1oz plain chocolate

SERVES 6

1 Split the cooled chocolate cake through the middle and sandwich together with cherry conserve. Cut the cake into pieces and arrange in the base of a glass dish.
2 Drain the syrup from the cherries and mix with the kirsch. Pour over the cake, then sprinkle all but 12 of the cherries on top. Set aside to soak.
3 To make the custard, mix the sugar and cornflour. Gradually blend in the milk. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring several times until thick.
4 Whisk a little of the hot mixture into the egg yolks, then whisk into the thickened milk. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 2-3 minutes. Whisk in butter and vanilla.
5 Place the chocolate in a small bowl and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 1 minute, or until melted. Whisk into the hot custard and spread over the sponge and cherries. Cool.
6 Spread two-thirds of the cream over the trifle. Using a piping bag fitted with a large star nozzle, pipe the remaining cream in a decorative pattern. Decorate with cherries and chocolate squares.

DON LAST

Black Forest Trifle

Cooking with cheese 1

Cheese is tops! A bubbling, golden addition to countless dishes — so versatile that you can serve it from breakfast to partytime — and it melts marvellously in the microwave.

RAY DUNS

Cauliflower Cheese

The favourite and familiar cheeses of cooking: Cheddar, Parmesan, Gruyère and Emmental are all 'hard' cheeses. Their excellent cooking qualities make them the staple of some favourite classic dishes from a classy cheese fondue to a family-style cauliflower cheese. Sprinkled over meat or vegetable dishes they melt to a golden gratin topping.

Popular hard cheeses for cooking

Cheddar cheese is one of the most popular cheeses worldwide. It has a rich, full flavour and a close, buttery texture. Cheddar varies in colour from buttery yellow to orangy-red. The flavour ranges from mild to strong; mature Farmhouse Cheddar is the richest. Cheddar-type cheeses include Colby and Monterey Jack made in the United States of America, and Cheedam in Australia.

Cheshire cheese, made in England, has a distinctive slightly salty flavour and a flaky texture.

Lancashire cheese is a white, slightly crumbly, semi-hard cheese with a mild flavour which becomes stronger as the cheese matures. It is good for cooking as it melts very quickly.

Red Leicester cheese is slightly more moist than Cheddar cheese, and is a bright orange-red colour. It melts quickly and easily.

Parmesan cheese is probably the second most well-known hard cheese after Cheddar. This Italian cheese is extremely hard and has quite a bitter 'edge' to it. Ready-grated Parmesan is readily available from supermarkets and delicatessens, but you get a better flavour if you buy a block of the cheese and grate it yourself. It melts extremely well and adds its very distinctive flavour to a variety of dishes.

Gruyère cheese is one of the well-known Swiss hard cheeses, ideal for cooking and a staple ingredient of the Swiss cheese fondue. A pale yellow cheese with a slightly greasy rind, it is characterized by tiny holes or slits.

Emmental cheese is similar to Gruyère in its superb cooking qualities. It has larger holes and a slightly sweet, mellow flavour.

Microwaving cheese

Cheese has a high fat content which attracts microwaves. A certain amount of care has to be taken when microwaving, or it will separate and harden. For best results, grate the cheese first (so the microwaves can penetrate easily) and use 50% (Medium) or 70% (Medium-High) power. If you overheat cheese the protein hardens and sets, and this makes the cheese unattractive as well as hard to digest.

Cook's notes

Although a cheese topping melts well in the microwave it is hard to achieve a brown and crisp surface. If you wish, pop the finished microwaved dish under a hot grill for 1-2 minutes, or until golden.

Cauliflower cheese

13¼ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb whole cauliflower, with the green leaves
15ml / 1tbls fresh brown breadcrumbs

CHEESE SAUCE
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
22.5ml / 1½tbls plain flour
275ml / ½pt milk
salt and pepper
75g / 3oz Red Leicester or Cheddar cheese, grated

SERVES 4

1 Trim the base of the cauliflower and rinse. Shake off excess water; stand cauliflower in deep dish.
2 Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes. Turn cauliflower over and microwave for 3-4 minutes, until the stem is almost tender. Rotate casserole every minute. Stand for 5 minutes.
3 Melt butter in a covered jug at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds.
4 Stir in the flour, then blend in the milk until smooth. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, stirring every 1½ minutes, until thick and smooth . Season and stir in cheese until melted.
5 Transfer the cauliflower to a round 20cm / 8in dish. Pour the cheese over and sprinkle with breadcrumbs. Microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 2-3 minutes.

Cheese 'n' salad toastie

2 mins

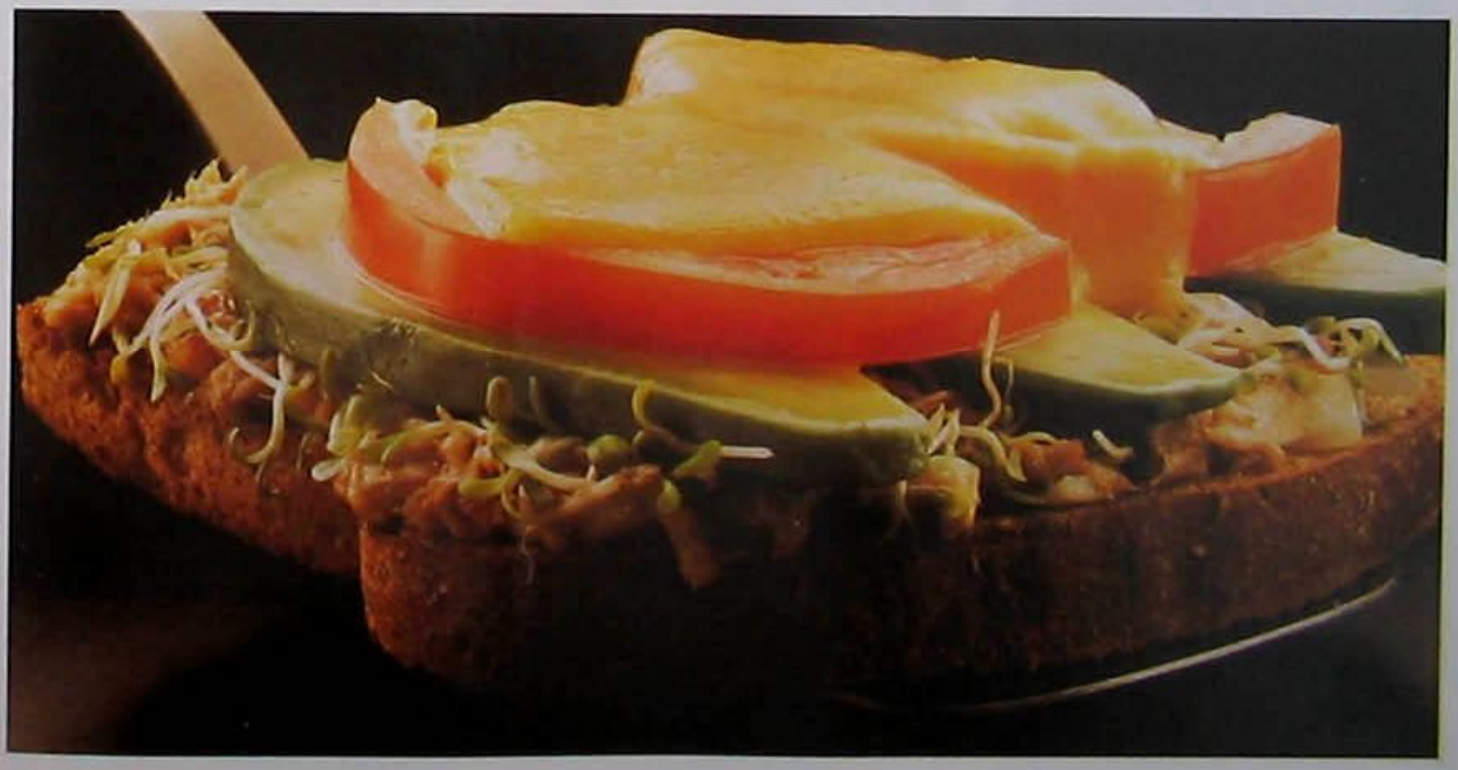
Standing time: none

2 bacon rashers, cooked and crumbled
95g / 3.3oz can tuna, drained
30ml / 2tbls mayonnaise
1 spring onion, chopped
2 large slices wholewheat bread, toasted
30ml / 2tbls alfalfa sprouts
½ avocado, stoned, skinned and sliced
2 slices tomato, halved
2 × 20g / ¾oz Emmental cheese

SERVES 2

1 Mix together the bacon, tuna, mayonnaise and onion. Spread half the mixture on each piece of toast. Top with the sprouts, avocado, tomato and cheese.
2 Microwave on absorbent paper at 70% (Medium-High) for 2-3½ minutes turning once.

Cheese 'n' Salad Toastie



Cheesy pasta with meatballs

17 mins

Standing time: 1 min

200g / 7oz rigatoni
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated

SAUCE
4 tomatoes, skinned, seeded and chopped
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
70g / 2¾oz tomato paste or purée
5ml / 1tsp Italian seasoning
2.5ml / ½tsp sugar
salt and pepper

MEATBALLS
450g / 1lb lean minced beef
1 egg, beaten
30ml / 2tbls grated Parmesan cheese
30ml / 2tbls dry breadcrumbs
15ml / 1tbls milk
5ml / 1tsp Italian seasoning
1 garlic clove, minced
salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 6

Garlic cheese savouries

5¼ mins

Standing time: none

40g / 1½oz butter
40g / 1½oz Cheddar cheese, grated
50g / 2oz plain flour, sifted
pinch of salt
1.5ml / ¼tsp garlic powder

MAKES 26

1 Soften the butter at 30% (Low) for 20 seconds. Beat in the cheese until blended.
2 Stir in flour, salt and garlic powder to make a soft dough. Wrap and chill for 30 minutes.
3 Roll the dough out to an 18 × 15cm / 7 × 6in rectangle, 6mm / ¼in thick. Cut into 12mm × 7.5cm / ½ × 3in sticks.
4 Line a tray with baking paper. Add 12-14 cheese savouries. Make sure they do not touch.
5 Stand the tray on an inverted plate and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, or until firm. Repeat with remainder.

1 Cook the rigatoni conventionally and drain.
2 Meanwhile, combine all the ingredients for the sauce in a large casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, stirring once. Reduce to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for 3-4 minutes, stirring once. Stir in the rigatoni, cover; set aside.
3 Combine the meatball ingredients in a mixing bowl. Mix well until they are thoroughly blended, then shape into 18 meatballs, each about 4cm / 1½in round.
4 Arrange the meatballs in a baking dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes or until no longer pink, rearranging twice.
5 Drain the meatballs and add to the rigatoni and sauce. Toss gently together and top with the grated Cheddar cheese. Cover and microwave at 70% (Medium-High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the cheese melts. Stand for 1 minute.

Left: *Garlic Cheese Savouries*
Below: *Cheesy Pasta with Meatballs*

Mushroom appetizer

5½ mins

Standing time: 2-3 mins

4 mushrooms, each about 7.5cm / 3in in diameter
15g / ½oz butter or margarine
50g / 2oz ham, finely chopped
½ small onion, finely chopped
pepper
50g / 2oz Lancashire cheese
parsley sprigs, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Remove the mushroom stalks and chop finely. Place in a bowl with the butter, ham and onion. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1½-2½ minutes, or until tender. Season.
2 Place mushrooms, stem side up, in a dish and fill with ham mixture. Cut cheese into four slices and use to top each mushroom.
3 Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 4-5 minutes, rotating the dish a half turn and rearranging the mushrooms halfway through. Stand for 2-3 minutes. Garnish.

Mixed cheese fondue

5 mins

Standing time: none

20ml / 4tsp cornflour
275ml / ½pt dry white wine
100g / 4oz Emmental, grated
175g / 6oz Gruyère cheese, grated
15ml / 1tbls kirsch
ground nutmeg, to taste
white pepper
bread cubes, to serve

SERVES 6

1 Blend the cornflour with a little wine in a 1.1L / 2pt casserole. Stir in the remaining wine and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, stirring every 30 seconds.
2 Stir the cheese into the wine until melted, then add the kirsch and nutmeg and pepper to taste.
3 Microwave at 30% (Low) for 1-2 minutes, stirring every 15 seconds. Serve with bread cubes.

Above: *Mushroom Appetizer*
Below: *Mixed Cheese Fondue*

Small cakes to freeze

Make up a batch of home-baked cakes to freeze, ready to microwave-thaw when unexpected guests drop in, or for when you feel like a spoil-yourself tea-time treat.

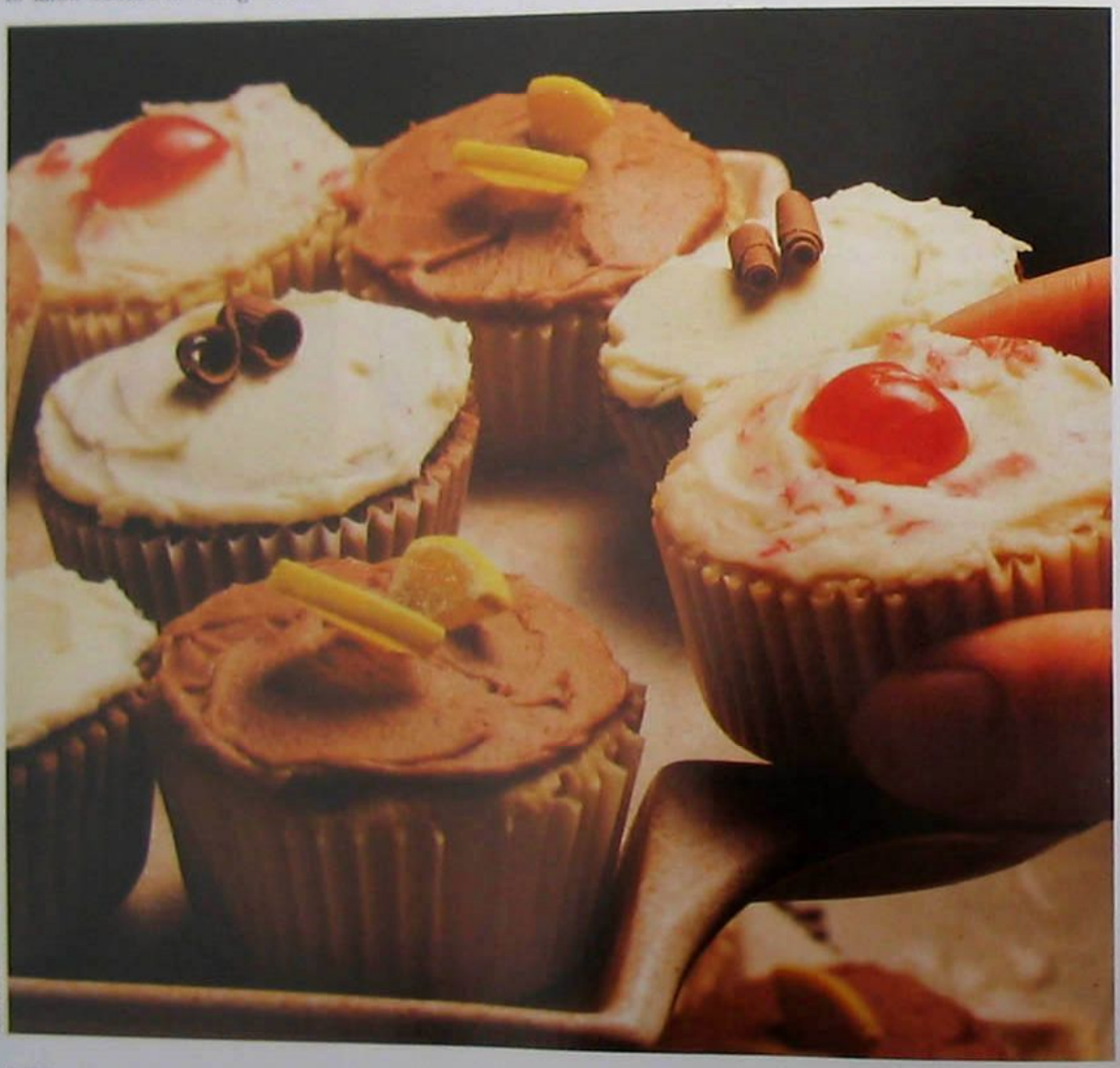
Perfect tea-time fare, these small cakes take next to no time to microwave and they freeze beautifully for up to 1 month. Make up a selection for unexpected tea-time visitors.

To microwave small cakes, use two paper cup cake cases for each cake and only half fill with mixture to allow room for rising. A microwave muffin tray is ideal for supporting the cases. If you do not possess one, use ramekin dishes and place in a circle in the cooker, leaving the centre empty. Microwave for minimum recommended time, then test if cooked by pressing lightly: the tops should spring back. Any moisture on the cake surfaces dries on standing.

Freezing and thawing

Plain cakes freeze successfully in freezer bags, but iced or decorated cakes are safer in rigid containers. For most even results, thaw cakes in a circle in the cooker. Watch iced cakes for melting and remove if this occurs.

Cup Cakes with Butter Icings



Microtips

Recipe time boxes and first standing times cover making all cakes. Thawing and standing after thawing times refer to just one batch of six cakes, except Orange Babas and Golden Cakes, where times are for all cakes; Orange Babas — microwaving time includes sauce.

Cup cakes

3 mins

Standing time: 6-9 mins

Thawing time: 1 min

Standing after thawing: 5 mins

75g / 3oz margarine, softened
75g / 3oz soft light brown sugar
2 eggs, beaten
100g / 4oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
few drops of lemon juice
15ml / 1tbls milk
15ml / 1tbls cocoa powder, sifted
25g / 1oz glacé cherries, rinsed and quartered
175g / 6oz Butter Icing (see recipe below)

MAKES 18

Butter icing

5 secs

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz butter
100g / 4oz icing sugar, sifted
few drops of vanilla flavouring

MAKES 175g / 6oz

1 Soften the butter at 20-30% (Defrost) for 5-10 seconds.
2 Cream together the butter and icing sugar; add flavouring.

VARIATIONS
Flavour each third as follows:
Chocolate butter icing: mix 5ml / 1tsp cocoa powder with 5ml / 1tsp hot water and stir in.
Glacé cherry icing: stir in three finely-chopped cherries.
Lemon butter icing: add the grated zest of ½ small lemon and 2.5ml / ½tsp lemon juice.

How to microwave Cup cakes

Cream *together margarine and sugar. Beat in eggs. Sift in flour and salt, then beat in lemon juice and milk. Stir cocoa into one third of mixture in separate bowl; stir cherries into another third; leave last portion plain.*

Place *two paper cake cases in six wells of microwave muffin tray or six ramekins. Use a teaspoon to half fill each of the six cases with the cherry mixture. Place in the cooker arranging the ramekins in a circle.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 1-1½ minutes, rotating half a turn once. Stand for 2-3 minutes then transfer to a wire rack to cool. Repeat with the chocolate and plain mixtures.*

To ice *the cakes: make up the Butter Icing as directed. When the cakes are completely cooled, use a palette knife to spread the icing over the cakes and smooth over the surface.*

How to freeze and thaw cup cakes

Pack *the cup cakes in one or two rigid freezer containers, separating each layer with freezer or greaseproof paper. Seal and label clearly, giving thawing instructions. Freeze for up to 1 month.*

To thaw: *remove six cakes and place in a circle on a plate. Microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 1-1½ minutes; stand for 5 minutes, then decorate as liked. Repeat as required.*

Orange babas

11 mins

Standing time: 2 mins

Thawing time: 2 mins

Standing after thawing: 5-10 mins

CAKE

225g / 8oz plain flour, sifted
275g / 10oz sugar
12.5ml / 2½tsp baking powder
5ml / 1tsp salt
150g / 5oz margarine, softened
4 eggs
175ml / 6fl oz milk
15ml / 1tbls grated orange zest

ORANGE SAUCE (TO SERVE)

100g / 4oz butter or margarine
100g / 4oz sugar
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
90ml / 6tbls orange juice
225ml / 8fl oz water
30ml / 2tbls lemon juice

MAKES 14-16

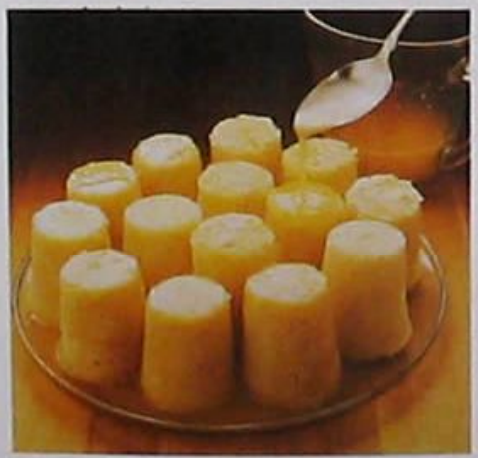
1 Combine cake ingredients. Use to fill the paper cups as directed in step 1, below. Then freeze and thaw babas as directed.

2 For sauce: place all ingredients except lemon juice in bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-6 minutes, stirring once. Stir in lemon juice; spoon over thawed babas. Soak for 1 hour. Serve with cream and grated zest.

How to microwave, freeze and thaw Orange babas

Make up *the cake mixture and use to half-fill 14-16 paper cups. Arrange six or eight in a ring and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4½ minutes, or until almost dry on top; rotate once.*

Stand *for 1 minute. Loosen edges and turn out onto a dish; cool. Repeat with remaining baba mixture. To freeze: pack in a freezer bag, label and freeze for up to 1 month.*



To thaw: *unpack babas and place on a plate. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes; rotate half a turn once. Stand 5-10 minutes. (To thaw half, microwave for 1-1¼ minutes.)*

Pineapple cup cakes

8 mins

Standing time: none
Thawing time: 1½ mins
Standing after thawing: 3 mins

90ml / 6tbls milk
15ml / 1tbls bran breakfast cereal, crushed
75g / 3oz plain flour, sifted
75g / 3oz wholewheat flour
175g / 6oz soft brown sugar
7.5ml / 1½tsp baking powder
432g / 15oz can crushed pineapple, well drained
90ml / 6tbls vegetable oil
1 egg, lightly beaten

TOPPING
25g / 1oz butter or margarine
15ml / 1tbls bran breakfast cereal, crushed
90ml / 6tbls digestive or plain sweet biscuits, crushed

MAKES 18

1 Line the wells of a microwave muffin tray or six ramekins with two paper cases each.
2 For topping: place butter in a bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds. Add topping ingredients.
3 Soak milk and cereal in a bowl for 2 minutes; add remaining ingredients. Half-fill paper cases.
4 Sprinkle evenly with the topping. Place the muffin tray in the cooker, or arrange ramekins in a ring. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, rotating half a turn once. Cool on wire rack. Repeat with remaining mixture.
5 To freeze: pack in freezer bag, label and freeze up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Microwave at 100% (High), allowing 15-20 seconds per cake. Stand for 3 minutes.

VARIATION
Fruity cup cakes: substitute 400g / 14oz can drained blueberries or 2 × 213g / 7½oz cans drained blackcurrants for crushed pineapple. Top with 30ml / 2tbls brown sugar, 30ml / 2tbls sugar and 2.5ml / ½tsp cinnamon.

Golden cakes

2¾ mins

Standing time: none
Thawing time: 2¼ mins
Standing after thawing: 3 mins

45ml / 3tbls vegetable oil
60ml / 4tbls plain flour
50g / 2oz maize meal
15ml / 1tbls sugar
10ml / 2tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp salt
1 egg
60ml / 4tbls milk

MAKES 9

1 Line the wells of a microwave muffin tray or six ramekins with two paper cases each.
2 Mix together all the ingredients for the cakes until just blended. Use to half-fill cases.
3 Place the muffin tray in the cooker and arrange the ramekins in a ring. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, or until the tops spring back when lightly touched, rotating half a turn once. Transfer to wire rack to cool.
4 Line three wells of the muffin tray with two paper cases each, leaving an empty well between each, or use three ramekins. Half-fill with the remaining mixture. Microwave at 100% (High) for 45-60 seconds, rotating half a turn once. Transfer to wire rack to cool.
5 To freeze: pack in freezer bag, label and freeze up to 1 month.

TO SERVE
Remove the desired number of cakes and microwave at 100% (High), allowing 15-20 seconds per muffin, or until warm to touch. Allow to stand for 3 minutes.

Cook's notes

Maize meal, or cornmeal, is the yellow meal ground from maize. It flavours and colours cakes and breads, and is available from health food stores.

Top to bottom: *Fruity Cup cakes, Pineapple Cup cakes, Golden Cakes*

Speedy sausagemeat

Sausagemeat microwaves beautifully and is very versatile. Try it with pasta, wrapped in a cabbage leaf or baked in a pie for tasty snacks or family meals that are ready in less than half an hour.

RAY DUNN

Sausagemeat is a versatile and convenient base for many different recipes. It is widely available from supermarkets or small local butchers who often pride themselves in making meaty and flavourful regional varieties and are worth searching out.

Sausagemeat is sold both fresh and frozen and is ideal for making very quick meals in the microwave. It can be used instantly — needs no trimming or cutting up — and mixes well with other meat and vegetables. It is also easy to shape — as a stuffing or in fun snacks like Sausagemeat Snacks or Porcupine Meatballs.

Like all minced meats, sausagemeat should be used quickly when it is fresh. Since it contains a high proportion of fat this should be drained off during cooking. If the meat hasn't been shaped, use a fork to stir and break it up.

Sausagemeat vegetable pie

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb sausagemeat
1 onion, coarsely chopped
2 carrots, coarsely grated
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
½ green pepper, chopped
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
5ml / 1tsp tomato paste or purée
2.5ml / ½tsp dried mixed herbs
10ml / 2tsp Worcestershire sauce
150ml / ¼pt tomato sauce
213g / 7.5oz can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
salt and pepper to taste
131g / 4½oz instant mashed potato
275ml / ½pt water
275ml / ½pt milk

SERVES 4

Sausagemeat Vegetable Pie

1 Combine sausagemeat, onion, carrots, celery, green pepper and mushrooms in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until meat is no longer pink. Drain.
2 Add tomato purée, herbs, Worcestershire sauce, tomato sauce, kidney beans and salt and pepper. Stir well to break up the meat. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Stand for 5 minutes.
3 Meanwhile, make the potato topping: Mix instant potato into water and milk in a large, deep bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes until thick and smooth, stirring every minute.
4 Spread potatoes over filling with a fork. Microwave uncovered for 5 minutes at 100% (High) until piping hot.

VARIATION
To make a fresh mashed potato topping, put 900g / 2lb potatoes, cut into 12mm / ½in cubes, into a large bowl with 75ml / 3floz water. Microwave, covered, at 100% (High) for 10-12 minutes, stirring once. Stand for 5 minutes, then drain. Add 25g / 1oz butter, salt and pepper to taste and mash well.

Porcupine meatballs

8 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

450g / 1lb sausagemeat
75g / 3oz long-grain rice, cooked
1 small onion, grated
salt and pepper to taste
7.5ml / 1½tsp parsley flakes
275ml / 10fl oz sieved tomato
2.5ml / ½tsp mustard powder

SERVES 4

1 Mix sausagemeat, rice, onion, seasoning, parsley and half sieved tomato thoroughly. Shape into 12 balls and arrange in rows in a 20 × 30cm / 8 × 12in dish.
2 Mix remaining sieved tomato with mustard and pour over the meat balls. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes.
3 Rearrange the meatballs and turn them over. Cover and microwave for 4-6 minutes or until firm. Stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

Sausagemeat roly-poly

17½ mins

Standing time: 5 mins

2 courgettes, grated
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
25g / 1oz Parmesan cheese, grated
1.5ml / ¼tsp grated nutmeg
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic purée or paste
pepper
100g / 4oz minced pork
450g / 1lb sausagemeat
25g / 1oz butter
67.5ml / 4½tbls dried wholemeal breadcrumbs
2.5ml / ½tsp paprika

SERVES 4

1 Put courgettes and mushrooms into a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until just softened. Drain thoroughly. Stir in cheese, nutmeg, garlic purée and pepper. Set aside.
2 Mix the pork and sausagemeat thoroughly. Turn out on to a sheet of greaseproof paper. With slightly wetted hands, pat the meat into a rectangle about 18 × 28cm / 7 × 15in; neaten edges.
3 Spread the courgette and mushroom mixture over the top. Roll up tightly from one short side, with the aid of the paper. Place the roll, seam side down, on a roasting rack.
4 Place butter in a small bowl, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-45 seconds until melted. Mix the breadcrumbs and paprika. Brush the roll with the melted butter and press on the breadcrumbs to coat the roll completely.
5 Cover loosely and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Rotate dish a half turn; reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) and microwave for a further 10 minutes, rotating the dish several times.
6 Cover with foil, shiny side in, and stand for 5 minutes.

Left: *Porcupine Meatballs*
Above right: *Sausagemeat Roly-poly*

Sausage pockets

22 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

8 cabbage leaves (see Microtips, right)

FILLING

100g / 4oz long-grain rice
450g / 1lb cooked ham, diced
225g / 8oz sausagemeat
1 egg, beaten
1 small onion, minced
1.5ml / ¼tsp mustard powder
salt and pepper to taste
4 tomatoes, each cut into eight wedges
60ml / 4tbls chilli sauce
10ml / 2tsp brown sugar

SERVES 4

Sausage pockets for two: use half the ingredients and microwave rice for 1½-2½ minutes in step 2. Microwave 10-15 minutes at step 6.

Freezer notes

To thaw 450g / 1lb sausagemeat, remove plastic covering from meat by slitting it open with a knife. Place meat on a roasting rack, cover and microwave at 20-30% (Defrost) for 4 minutes. Cut in half; place both halves in centre of rack. Cover original ends with small pieces of well secured foil; microwave for 3-4 minutes at 20-30% (Defrost). Stand for 4-5 minutes.

Microtips

A quick and easy way to remove the cabbage leaves is to microwave the whole, trimmed white cabbage at 100% (High) for 2 minutes, or until eight outer leaves can be separated easily. Wrap the remaining cabbage in a polythene bag and refrigerate for later use.

How to microwave Sausage pockets

Cut *out hard centre stalk from each cabbage leaf. Set aside. Put remainder in a polythene bag and refrigerate for future use.*

Place *rice in a bowl with 175ml / 6fl oz boiling water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-5 minutes; stir. Stand for 5 minutes; drain.*

Put *cabbage leaves in a large bowl and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-2½ minutes, or until tender, turning over halfway through cooking.*

Combine *rice, ham, sausagemeat, egg, onion and half the mustard; season and mix thoroughly. Lay leaves out and fill each one.*

Fold *cabbage over filling; place pockets, seams down in a 20 × 30cm / 8 × 12in dish. Place tomatoes on top. Mix chilli sauce, sugar and mustard.*

Pour *sauce over cabbage. Microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15-20 minutes, until firm or internal temperature is 70°C / 160°F, turning twice.*

Sausagemeat 'n' noodles

12 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb sausagemeat
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
175g / 6oz green tagliatelle, cooked conventionally and drained
100g / 4oz mushrooms, sliced
salt and pepper to taste
100g / 4oz Cheddar cheese, grated
25g / 1oz Parmesan cheese, grated
30ml / 2tbls milk

SERVES 4

1 Combine sausagemeat, onion and celery in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole; cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-9 minutes, until the sausagemeat is no longer pink and the vegetables are tender. Stir to break up halfway through cooking. Drain.
2 Stir in the tagliatelle. Add mushrooms, salt and pepper, Cheddar cheese, half the Parmesan and all the milk. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, or until the cheese melts, stirring halfway through. Sprinkle remaining Parmesan on top.

Sausagemeat lasagne

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

225g / 8oz lean minced beef
225g / 8oz sausagemeat
1 small onion, finely chopped
200ml / 7fl oz Italian tomato sauce
64g / 2¼oz can tomato paste or purée
10ml / 2tsp brown sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp garlic purée or paste
450g / 1lb cottage cheese
25g / 1oz Parmesan cheese, grated
1 egg, beaten
5ml / 1tsp dried mixed herbs
pepper
100g / 4oz Mozzarella cheese, grated
100g / 4oz lasagne, cooked conventionally and drained

SERVES 4

1 Combine the beef, sausagemeat and onion in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7-8 minutes, or until the meat is no longer pink, stirring two or three times to break up meat. Drain.
2 Stir in tomato sauce, tomato paste, brown sugar and garlic and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-10 minutes or until heated through, stirring every 2 minutes. Set aside. Mix the cottage cheese with the Parmesan cheese. Add egg, mixed herbs, and half the grated Mozzarella.
3 Line a 20 × 20cm / 8 × 8in dish with half the lasagne, then half the mince and sausagemeat mixture and half the cheese. Repeat with another layer of lasagne, then meat and cheese layers. Sprinkle remaining Mozzarella on top. Cover.
4 Microwave at 100% (High) for 6-7 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) and microwave for a further 2-3 minutes, rotating the dish twice during cooking. Cover with foil and stand for 5 minutes.
5 Serve with courgettes sautéed with onions, black olives and oregano.

Left: *Sausagemeat 'n' Noodles*
Above: *Sausagemeat Lasagne*

Sausagemeat snacks

20 mins

Standing time: 5 mins

These make good party treats for children and may be made with or without sticks.

450g / 1lb sausagemeat
4 rashers streaky bacon, rinds removed, finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
30ml / 2tbls chopped parsley
salt and pepper to taste
5ml / 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 egg, beaten
90ml / 6tbls cornflakes or dried breadcrumbs
4 wooden lolly sticks
mustard or dips to serve

SERVES 4

Sausagemeat snacks for 2: halve quantities; microwave 10-12 minutes.

How to microwave Sausagemeat snacks

Combine *sausagemeat, bacon, onion, parsley, seasoning and Worcestershire sauce.*

Divide *into four to form oval-shaped patties. Dip in egg and coat with crumbs.*

Insert *a wooden stick in each, then arrange on a roasting rack with meat to the outside.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 20-25 minutes, or until firm. Cover and stand for 5 minutes.*

Microwaving marmalade

Home-made breakfast marmalades are a real treat — and so quick and easy with the microwave. There are a host of tangy flavours to try, including lime, satsuma and the traditional bitter orange preserve.

Microwaving marmalades has all the advantages of microwaving jams and jellies: bright, fresh colours and flavours, no sticky pans or hot kitchens and considerable time-saving.

Equipment

As with jam-making in the microwave, cooking utensils are minimal. Most important is a large, heatproof bowl that can contain boiling marmalade. A wooden spoon and juice extractor are required; sugar thermometer is optional.

Making chunky marmalades

Preparing the fruit: wash fruit well as the skins are chopped and used in cooking. The skin can be cut to the size preferred. The amount of pith and membrane included will affect the clearness of the finished marmalades. Squeeze out the juice, wrapping any pips, membrane and squeezed flesh in a piece of muslin to help the set.

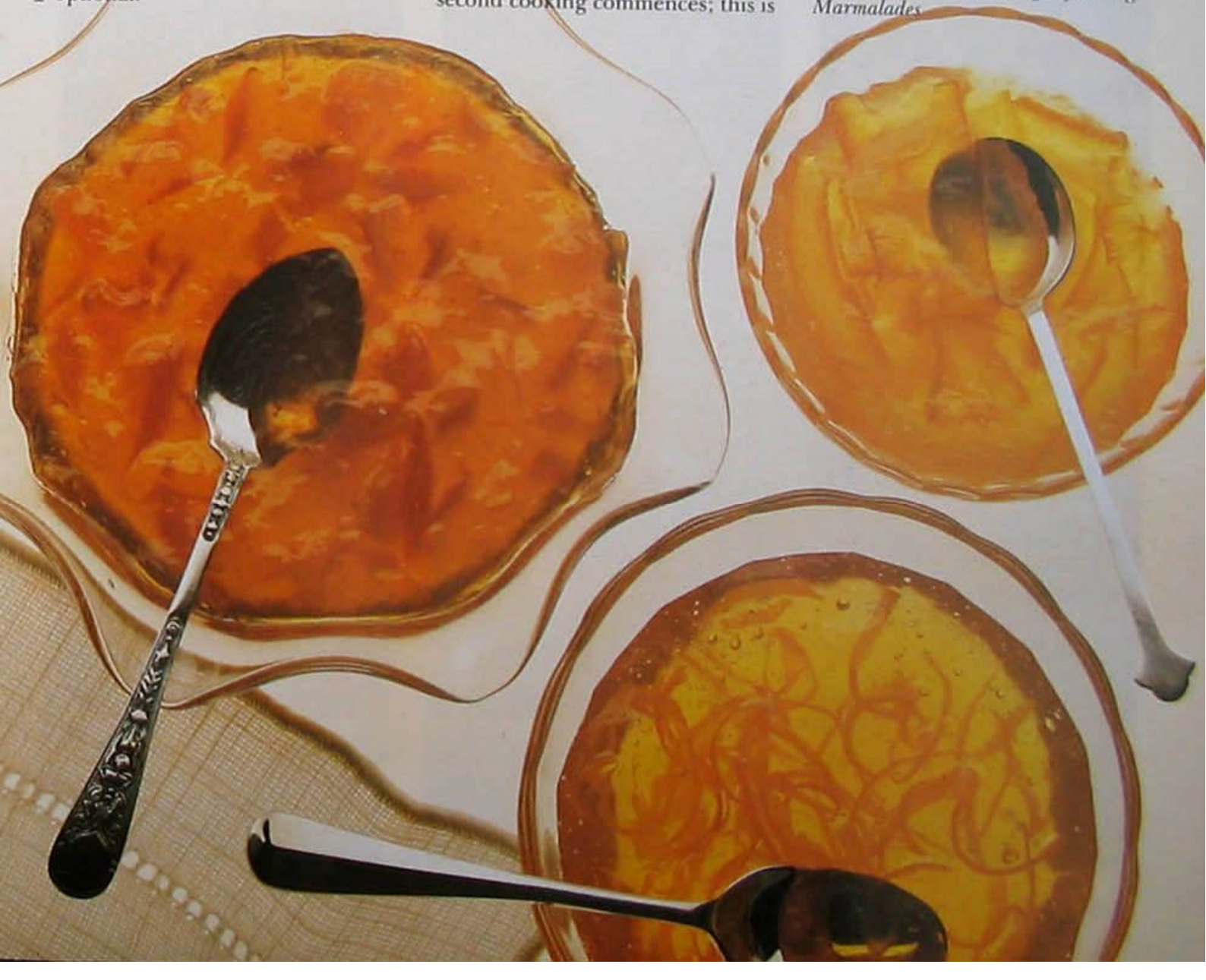
Cooking: the initial cooking reduces the quantity of marmalade and softens the fruit. Warmed sugar is then added, and the second cooking commences; this is to achieve a set, see Cook's notes, page 1418. These marmalades do not need skimming as the knob of butter prevents frothing.

Making jelly marmalades

Preparing the fruit: wash the fruit and finely pare the zest, making sure not to include any white pith. Wrap the zest in a piece of muslin, then squeeze the juice from the fruit, chop the squeezed shells and add to the water.

Clockwise from left: *Chunky Orange, Three Fruit and Jelly Orange Marmalades*

RAY DUNS



Cooking: after the initial cooking, to reduce the quantity of marmalade and soften the zest, the mixture is strained. (This takes the same time as for conventional marmalade.) After straining, brief microwaving brings the marmalade to almost boiling when the warmed sugar is added. Cooking continues until a set is reached.

Potting marmalades
Both chunky and jelly marmalades need to settle before potting to ensure the skin or zest is evenly suspended. Pour into warmed, sterilized jars and place a waxed disc on the surface. Leave to cool before sealing. Marmalades are ready for eating as soon as they are cold, but will keep in a cool, dark place for up to 12 months.

Chunky orange marmalade

78 mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb Seville oranges
60ml / 4tbls lemon juice
850ml / 1½pt boiling water
1.1kg / 2½lb sugar
knob of butter

MAKES ABOUT 1.8kg / 4lb

VARIATIONS
Dark orange marmalade: follow recipe and steps, cutting skin to desired size and thickness. Add 30ml / 2tbls black treacle with the sugar. For extra spice and flavour, tie six whole coriander seeds together with the pips in the muslin bag.

Microtips

Do not reduce the quantities in the recipes given here, as the high sugar content in marmalade attracts concentrated microwave energy — the mixture could be liable to burn.

Cook's notes

To test for a set, drop 5ml / 1tsp marmalade on a chilled saucer; cool. Push surface: if it wrinkles, setting point is reached. Alternatively, test with a conventional thermometer outside cooker, or microwave one inside: setting point is at 105°C / 221°F.

How to microwave Chunky orange marmalade

Scrub *the oranges and dry. Cut in half, then squeeze out the juice and pips. Place pips and any flesh from squeezer in a piece of muslin; tie up into a bag with a rubber band.*

Cut *the orange shells into chunky pieces, then put into a deep bowl together with the orange and lemon juice. Add the muslin bag and boiling water. Stir, then cover loosely.*

Microwave *at 100% (High) for 10 minutes; reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 35-40 minutes, or until peel is very soft. Press muslin bag against bowl to extract juice; discard.*

Warm *the sugar: place in a bowl and microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes until warmed. Stir the sugar into the fruit mixture and add the knob of butter.*

Microwave, *uncovered, at 100% (High) for 30-35 minutes, stirring after 5 minutes to dissolve sugar, then every 5 minutes until setting point is reached (see Cook's notes).*

Cool *and leave to settle for 5-10 minutes, then spoon into warmed, sterilized jars. Place waxed discs on the surface, wax side down. Cover and seal when cold. Store in cool place.*

Jelly orange marmalade

41 mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb Seville oranges
90ml / 6tbls lemon juice
1.4L / 2½pt boiling water
1.1kg / 2½lb sugar

MAKES ABOUT 1.5kg / 3½lb

1 Scrub and dry the oranges. Pare the skin thinly from three-quarters of the oranges. Cut into fine shreds and tie in muslin.
2 Cut all the oranges in half, squeeze the juice, then cut the shells roughly into small pieces. Put into a deep bowl with the orange and lemon juice, pips, muslin bag and boiling water; cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes.
3 Squeeze the muslin bag against the sides of the bowl, using a wooden spoon, to extract all the juice. Reserve the bag. Strain the pulp into a second bowl (see Cook's notes, below.) The juice should measure 0.8L / 1½pt.
4 Return the juice to the cleaned bowl. Add the shredded skin from the muslin bag. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10-15 minutes until nearly boiling.
5 Put the sugar into a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 3-3½ minutes to warm. Stir the sugar into the marmalade mixture. Microwave, uncovered, at 100% (High) for 18-25 minutes, stirring after the first 5 minutes to make sure the sugar is dissolved, then every 5 minutes until set.
6 Leave for 5 minutes to settle. Skim off any light scum before potting. Cover and seal.

Cook's notes

Strain the fruit mixture through a jelly bag, or a large nylon strainer lined with a double thickness of muslin, suspended over a large bowl. Leave, undisturbed, to drain for about 2 hours. Do not try to speed the process by squeezing the bag — this would make the marmalade cloudy.

Freezer notes

Seville oranges are the traditional fruit for marmalades as they have a good, bitter flavour. Unfortunately they have a very short season. So, if you don't want to make the marmalade immediately, freeze the oranges (whole in freezer bags) for up to 9 months. Allow to thaw completely at room temperature before using.

Lime marmalade

63 mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb limes
850ml / 1½pt boiling water
900g / 2lb sugar
knob of butter
3-4 drops green food colouring

MAKES 2kg / 4½lb

1 Scrub and dry the limes thoroughly. Cut in half and squeeze the juice. Cut the squeezed shells into fine strips. Tie the pips and any flesh from the squeezer in a muslin bag.
2 Place the lime strips, juice, muslin bag and boiling water in a deep bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 20-25 minutes, or until skins are very soft; squeeze the muslin bag gently against the sides of the bowl twice using a wooden spoon. Discard the bag.
3 Put the sugar into a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes to warm. Stir the sugar and butter into the fruit and add the colouring. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 minutes, stirring after first 3-5 minutes to make sure sugar is dissolved, then every 5 minutes until setting point is reached.
4 Leave for 5-10 minutes to settle before potting. Cover with the waxed discs; cover and seal when cold.

Lime Marmalade

RAY DUNS

Three fruit marmalade

58 mins

Standing time: none

The total weight of the fruit used in this recipe should be about 700g / 1½lb.

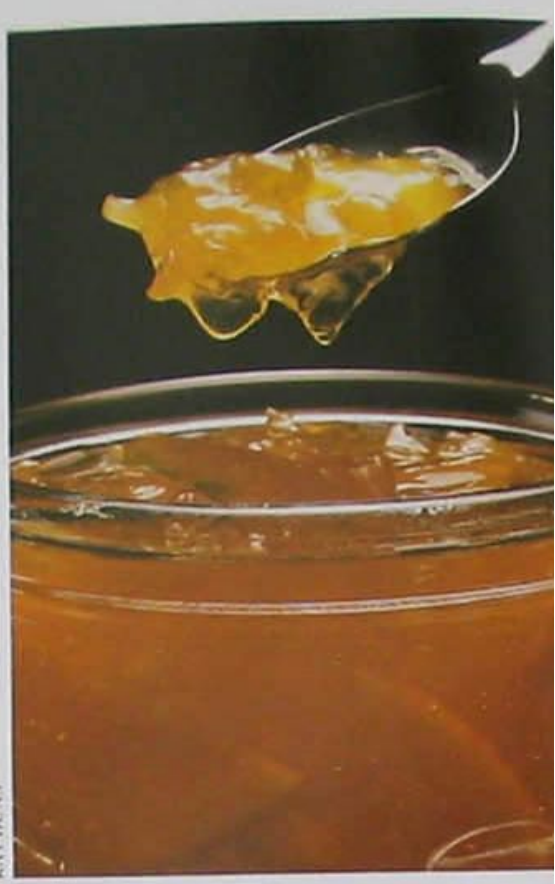
1 grapefruit
2 lemons
1 sweet orange
850ml / 1½pt boiling water
900g / 2lb sugar
knob of butter

MAKES 1.5kg / 3½lb

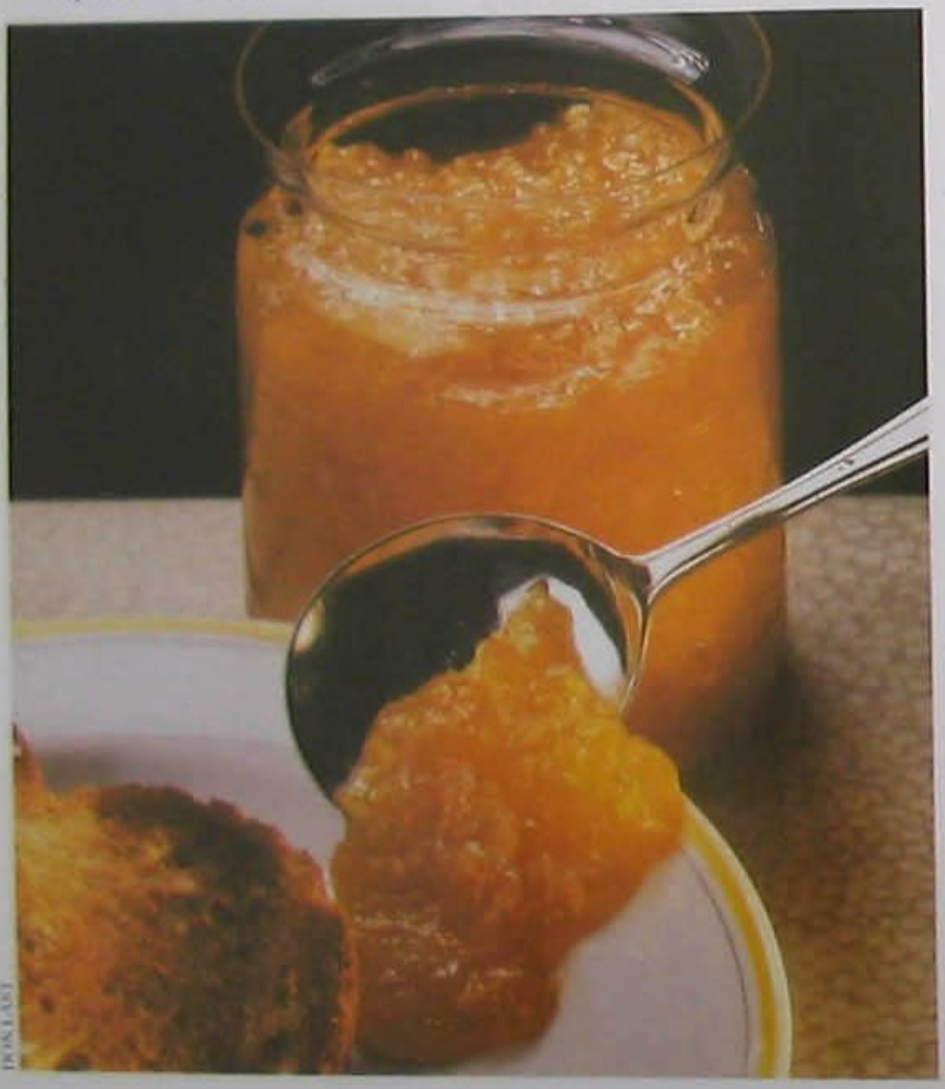
1 Scrub and dry the fruit. Cut in half and squeeze the juice. Cut the shells into thin strips, discarding excess pith. Tie the pips and any flesh from the squeezer in a piece of muslin.
2 Put the juice, strips of skin, muslin bag and boiling water into a deep bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 25-30 minutes, or until peel is very soft. Squeeze muslin bag against sides of the bowl with a wooden spoon; discard the bag.
3 Put the sugar into a bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes to warm. Stir into the fruit and add the butter. Microwave at 100% (High) for 20-30 minutes, stirring after 5 minutes to make sure sugar is dissolved, then every 5 minutes until set.
4 Leave 5-10 minutes to settle before potting. Cover with waxed discs; cover and seal when cold.

VARIATIONS
Whisky marmalade: replace 150ml / ¼pt of the boiling water with whisky and add to the fruit before cooking. Increase the sugar to 1kg / 2¼lb.

Right: *Whisky Marmalade*
Below: *Satsuma Marmalade*



RAY DUNS



THAMES

Satsuma marmalade

48 mins

Standing time: none

700g / 1½lb satsumas
1 lemon
850ml / 1½pt boiling water
900g / 2lb sugar
knob of butter

MAKES 2kg / 4½lb

1 Scrub and dry satsumas. Cut in half and squeeze the juice; shred the skin. Squeeze the juice from the lemon.
2 Put the juices, satsuma skin and boiling water into a deep bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 10-15 minutes, or until tender.
3 Put the sugar into a bowl. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes to warm. Stir into the fruit and add the butter. Microwave at 100% (High) for 25-30 minutes, stirring after first 3-5 minutes to make sure sugar is dissolved, then every 5 minutes until set.
4 Leave for 5 minutes to settle before potting. Cover with waxed discs; cover and seal when cold.

Marmalade tart

6½ mins

Standing time: none

Use any two of four attractive preserves from the storecupboard.

175g / 6oz frozen shortcrust or wholewheat pastry, thawed

FILLING

30ml / 2tbls Chunky Orange Marmalade
30ml / 2tbls Orange Jelly Marmalade
30ml / 2tbls Three Fruit Marmalade
30ml / 2tbls Lime Marmalade

SERVES 6-8

1 Roll out pastry on a lightly floured surface; use to line a 20cm / 8in microwave pie plate. Trim edges; roll out trimmings and cut into two 20cm / 8in strips. Hold each strip at either end and twist in opposite directions. Lay strips at right angles to each other across the pie plate, sealing to rim with a little water.

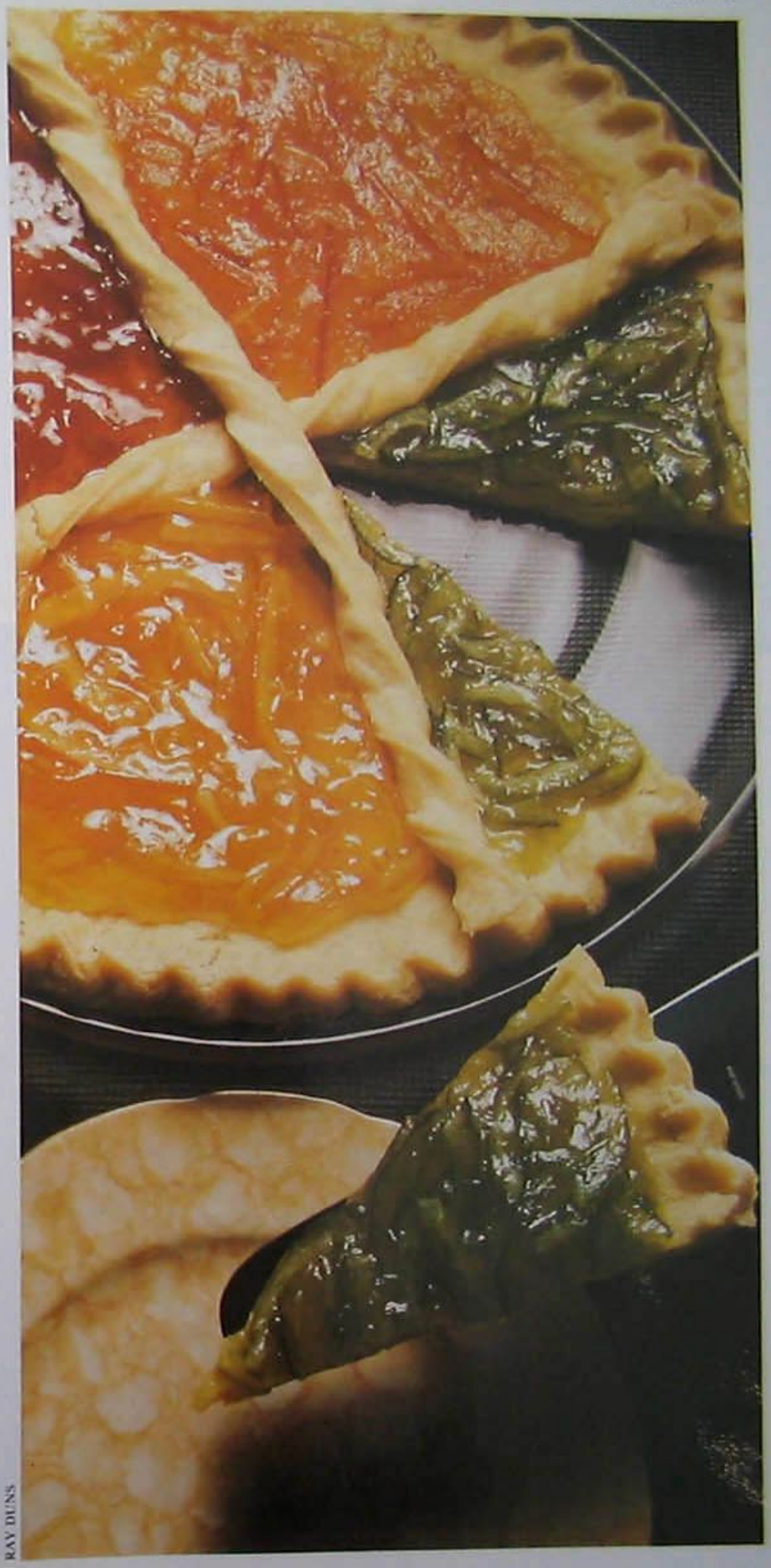
2 Prick the base and sides of the pastry case. Crimp edges to decorate. Lay absorbent paper over the pastry. Place on an upturned saucer and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, rotating a quarter turn twice. Remove paper and microwave for 2 minutes.

3 Fill each quarter of the pie case with a marmalade. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 1½-2 minutes until hot, watching carefully. Cool slightly before serving.

Marmalade Tart

Microtips

As marmalade contains a large quantity of sugar, it attracts high microwave energy. When microwave-heating a small quantity as in this tart, use 50% (Medium) power and watch constantly for overheating and burning during microwaving. Do not attempt to heat a small marmalade tart, or individual ones.



RAY DUNS

Supper after the show

Last-minute catering? Let the microwave take care of it for you. This elegant buffet with its sophisticated flavours and colourful appearance is perfect for entertaining friends after an evening out.

If you want to bring friends home to something more than just a snack after a show, but don't want to spend the evening worrying about cooking on your return, let your microwave lend a hand in making this lovely buffet.

The microwave can cook complete dishes in no time — at the last minute, if you like — so you can use it to produce a freshly cooked hot dish while you serve your guests with drinks, warm plates and dishes and set out the rest of the buffet.

The flavour of the terrine improves with keeping overnight, so you can stagger the preparations and make your day easier. The order of work in the Countdown will jog your memory to do the extra things such as chilling the wine and removing the spinach parcels from the refrigerator to reach room temperature before you cook them.

Last-minute preparations such as turning out the terrine and decorating the soufflé can be done just before you go out; don't leave too much to do when you get back — you may find you have to hurry and therefore not present the food at its very best.

Cook's notes

Assemble the fish salad just before you start the meal, otherwise the beetroot will start to colour the dressing and the apples will turn brown if exposed to the air for very long.

Countdown

The day before
Microwave the terrine and allow to cool. Chill overnight.

During the morning
Microwave the soufflé and refrigerate to set. Prepare the lettuce for the fish salad and other salad greens. Leave in the crisper until needed.

During the afternoon
Microwave the fish and potatoes, prepare the dressing and beetroot. Refrigerate in tightly-covered containers. Prepare the Spinach Parcels, pour over the sauce and refrigerate, covered. Decorate soufflé and refrigerate.

Just before going out
Set the table. Arrange base for the fish salad, but do not add the fish, potatoes, beetroot or dressing, or cut the apples. Turn out the terrine, garnish and refrigerate. Assemble the green salad and refrigerate, covered. Remove Spinach Parcels from the refrigerator. Chill wine.

Just before the meal
Microwave the Spinach Parcels according to the recipe. Assemble the fish salad, slicing the apple and adding it at the last minute so that it does not brown. Set all the food out on the table so that guests can help themselves to all the dishes.

MENU

Piquant Fish Salad
Fish, beetroot and apple in a tangy dressing

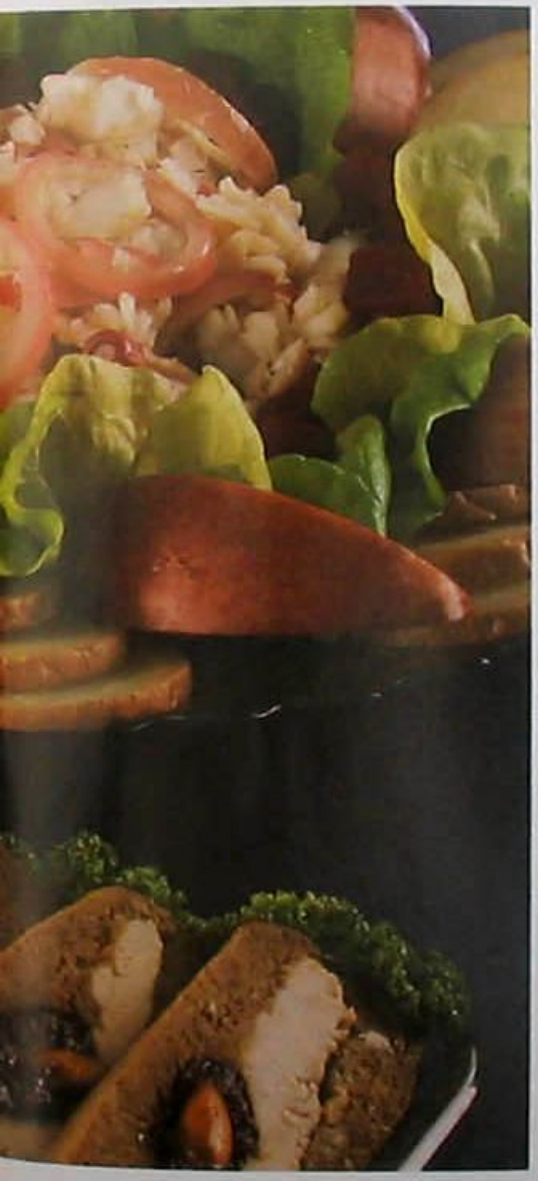
Fruity Chicken and Nut Terrine
An elegant layered pâté with contrasting textures

Spinach Parcels with Tomato
Herby stuffed leaves with a tangy sauce

Green Salad and Crusty French Bread
To accompany the savoury dishes

Lemon Apricot Soufflé
A refreshing, light soufflé with extra fruit

SERVES 6



Fruity chicken and nut terrine

20 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

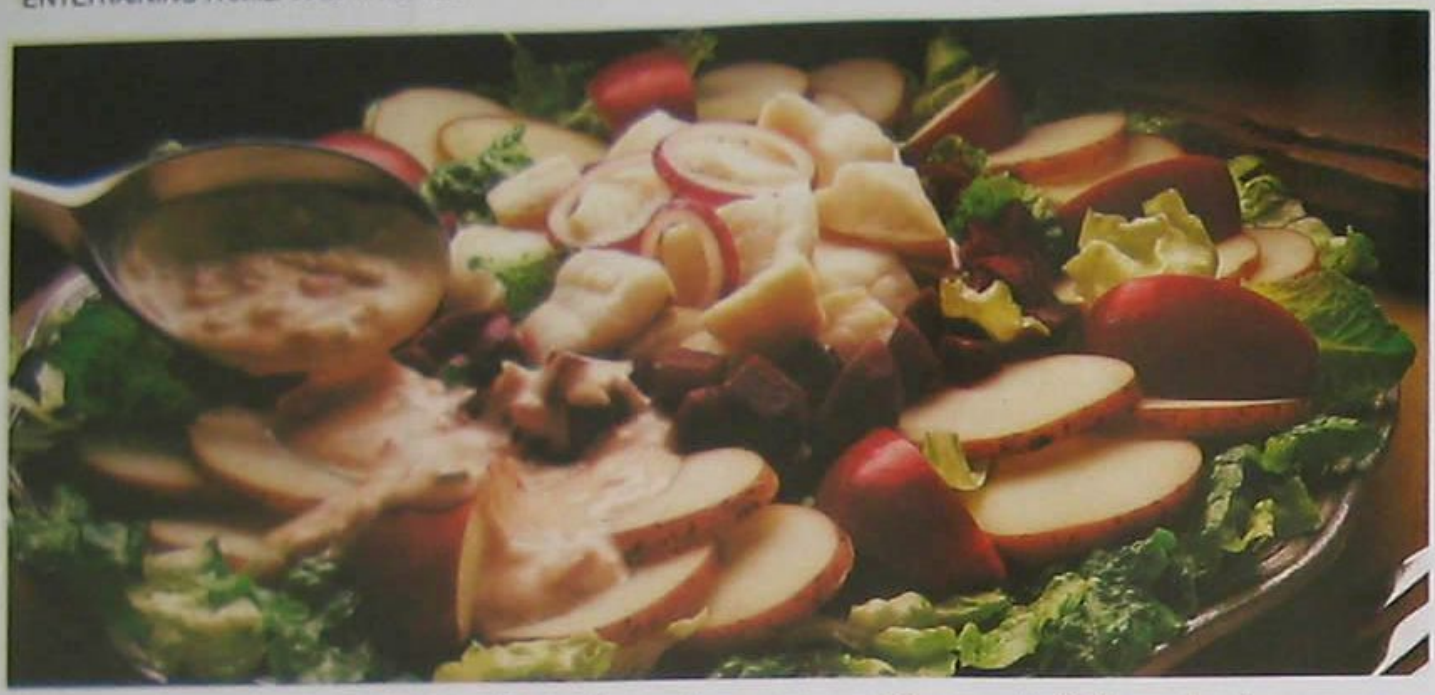
25g / 1oz butter
1 small onion, chopped
225g / 8oz chicken livers, trimmed
200g / 7oz crustless wholewheat bread, cut in cubes
150ml / ¼pt milk
45ml / 3tbls chopped parsley
1 egg yolk
15ml / 1tbls port or sherry
salt and pepper
8 tenderized prunes, stoned
8 blanched almonds toasted
30ml / 2tbls flaked almonds, toasted and chopped
150g / 5oz boneless chicken breast, skinned and thinly sliced

SERVES 6

1 Place the butter in a bowl and cover. Microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds, or until melted. Add the onion and chicken livers, stirring well to coat. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½-3 minutes, stirring once, until the onion is just tender.
2 Place the bread in a bowl, pour over the milk and leave to soak.
3 Place the chicken liver mixture, soaked bread, 15ml / 1tbls of the parsley, the egg yolk, port and salt and pepper to taste in a blender and purée until smooth.
4 Line the base of a 1L / 1¾pt terrine or loaf dish with greaseproof paper. Spoon in half of the chicken liver mixture and smooth the surface.
5 Stuff each prune with an almond and layer on top of the liver. Cover with sliced chicken. Sprinkle with chopped nuts and parsley.
6 Cover with the rest of the liver mixture and press down well. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 17-18 minutes, or until just firm to the touch. Stand, covered, for 10 minutes. Cool completely, chill. Turn out to serve.

Microtips

To brown the almonds for filling the prunes, place them on a piece of absorbent paper and microwave at 100% (High) for 4-5 minutes, turning every minute. To avoid burning, stand a small glass of water in the cooker while microwaving almonds.



Piquant fish salad

8½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

This fish salad can be made using either fresh or pickled beetroot, depending on availability.

2 red-skinned potatoes, thinly sliced
30ml / 2tbls water
1 crisp lettuce, torn in pieces
100g / 4oz pickled beetroot, diced
1 red apple, cored and cut in eighths

FISH MIXTURE
350g / 12oz white fish fillets, skinned and cut in 4cm / 1½in pieces
1 small red-skinned onion, thinly sliced
30ml / 2tbls wine vinegar
15ml / 1tbls water
pinch of ground allspice
3 whole cloves
6 whole black peppercorns
pinch of dillweed

DRESSING
150ml / ¼pt natural yoghurt
1 small onion, coarsely chopped
15ml / 1tbls tomato ketchup or sauce
15ml / 1tbls sweet pickle
pepper to taste

SERVES 6

How to microwave Piquant fish salad

Whisk *dressing ingredients together in a bowl; cover and chill. Rinse potatoes in cold water; pat dry. Place in a bowl with the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5-7 minutes, until tender, stirring once.*

Combine *all the fish mixture ingredients in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3½-4½ minutes, stirring once, until the fish flakes easily. Stand for 3 minutes, then cool and chill thoroughly.*

Arrange *the lettuce over the base of a large platter. Spoon the fish mixture into the centre of the dish in a mound. Arrange the chopped beetroot in a circle round the fish, taking care not to smudge the fish with red.*

Place *the apple wedges, skin side up, at intervals around the edge of the dish, then fan out slices of potato between the apples. Pour the dressing over the fish, beetroot and potato slices just before serving.*

Spinach parcels with tomato

20½ mins

Standing time: 3 mins

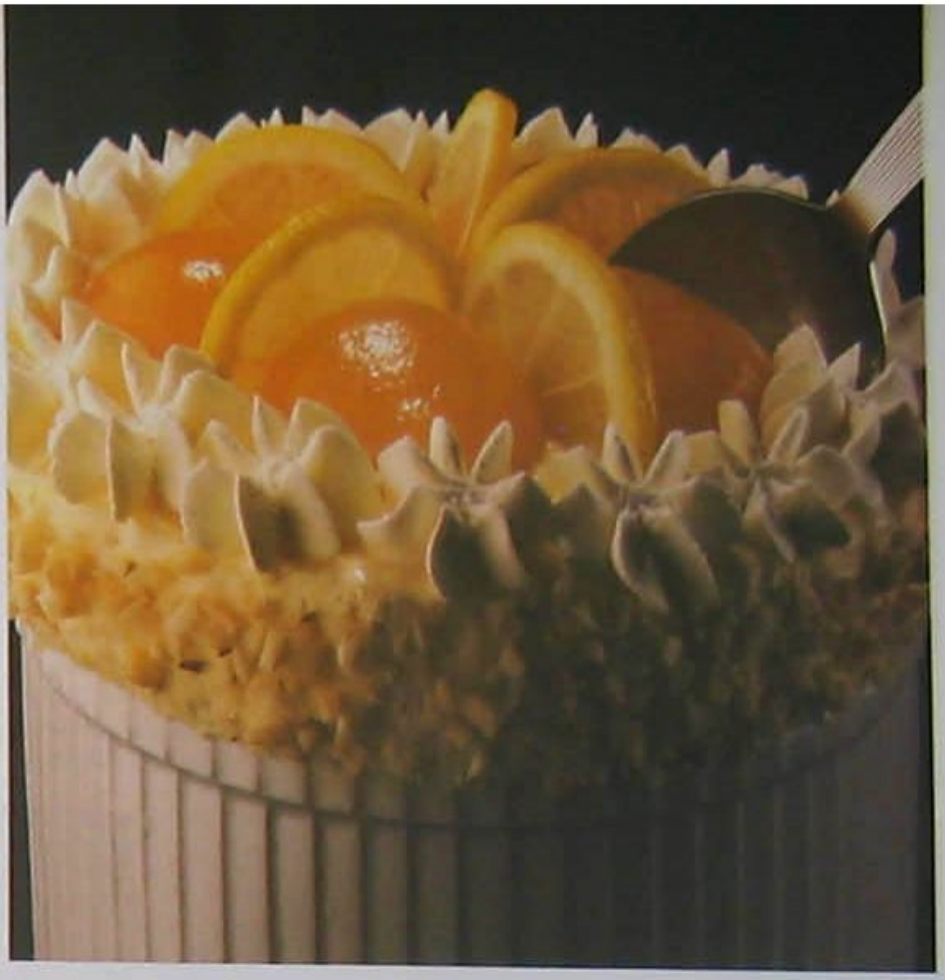
12 large spinach leaves
225g / 8oz pork sausagemeat
1 small onion, very finely chopped
200g / 7oz fresh white breadcrumbs
100g / 4oz button mushrooms, finely chopped
5ml / 1tsp dried mixed French herbs
salt and pepper
snipped chives, to garnish

SAUCE
396g / 14oz can chopped tomatoes
15ml / 1tbls dark soft brown sugar
15ml / 1tbls red wine vinegar
10ml / 2tsp cornflour
salt and pepper

SERVES 6

1 Trim any coarse stems from the spinach. Rinse well and place in a bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 30-60 seconds, or until just softened.
2 Mix the sausagemeat with the onion, breadcrumbs, mushroom, French herbs and salt and pepper to taste.
3 Divide the mixture equally between the spinach leaves. Fold the sides of each leaf over the filling, then roll up securely to enclose the sausage mixture. Place the rolls, seam side down, in a shallow dish.
4 Mix the tomatoes with the sugar, vinegar, cornflour and seasoning, blending well. Spoon over the spinach rolls.
5 Cover the dish and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 15 minutes, turning twice. Increase the power to 100% (High) and microwave for 5 minutes, giving a quarter turn once. Stand, covered for 3 minutes, then sprinkle with chives and serve.

VARIATION
The leaves of a Savoy cabbage make an attractive alternative to spinach; microwave for the same time.



Lemon Apricot Soufflé

Lemon apricot soufflé

1¼ mins

Standing time: none

4 large eggs, separated
125g / 4½oz caster sugar
grated zest and juice of 3 lemons
20ml / 4tsp (1½ sachets) powdered gelatine
200ml / 7fl oz double cream
220g / 7¾oz can apricots, drained

DECORATION
100g / 4oz chopped nuts
150ml / ¼pt whipping cream, whipped
lemon slices

SERVES 6

1 Lightly grease a 0.8L / 1½pt soufflé dish. Cut a double strip of greaseproof paper, 5cm / 2in wider than the height of the dish, and long enough to go around the outside of the dish and allow a slight overlap. Tie the paper securely around the dish. Brush the inside of the paper collar above the rim of the dish lightly with vegetable oil.
2 Place the egg yolks and sugar in a bowl and microwave at 30% (Low) for 1-2 minutes until barely warm. Whisk well until thick and creamy. Add the lemon zest and beat well.
3 Place the lemon juice in a small bowl and sprinkle over the gelatine. Microwave at 100% (High) for 15-30 seconds, or until the gelatine has dissolved and the liquid is clear. Stir into the egg mixture.
4 With clean beaters, whisk the egg whites until they stand in firm peaks. Whip the cream until smooth and thick. Finely chop all but five of the apricots.
5 Fold the cream and chopped apricots into the lemon mixture. Fold in the egg whites using a metal spoon, taking care not to knock air out of mixture. Pour into the prepared dish, level top and chill for 2-3 hours or until set.
6 Run a palette knife around the edge of the paper collar to loosen the soufflé. Ease the paper away and press the chopped nuts around the sides of the soufflé above the rim of the dish. Pipe whipped cream on the top, then decorate with lemon slices and reserved apricot pieces.

Casseroles to freeze

Heartwarming casseroles are easily made in the microwave and freeze beautifully. With one or two in stock you can make a meal for unexpected guests with the minimum of fuss.

If you know you have a busy time ahead, plan in advance and make up one or two of these wholesome casseroles for freezing. With the hard work out the way, all you need to do is remove the casserole from the freezer when required, then simply thaw and reheat in the microwave. Served with rice, or baked potato, and salad, you'll have a perfect, hearty supper.

Preparing and cooking a casserole is greatly helped by the microwave. Time taken is reduced and cooking is clean and odourless. Remember to stir during cooking and make sure meat and vegetables are cooked before freezing. Cool before wrapping.

Freezing

Casseroles are perfect freezer candidates as the liquid helps to keep ingredients moist. Cook and freeze in a microwave / freezer container; or, transfer the cooled food to a freezer bag and open-freeze in a serving dish as directed in the steps, opposite. This leaves the dish free to use while food is frozen. Freeze no longer than recommended time to enjoy the casseroles at their best.

Rich Country Casserole

Thawing and reheating

Thawing and reheating times vary according to the type of casserole. Start at 100% (High) to boost thawing, then reduce the power. Where ingredients are delicate and liable to disintegrate, it is best to reduce power to 50% (Medium). Ingredients that can withstand higher temperatures and thaw well right through to the centre, such as the Beefy Bean Casserole, can be left at 100% (High) or reduced to 70% (Medium-High).

To speed up reheating times once a dish is thawed, it is often helpful to boost the power again to 100% (High). It is important to break up the ingredients as soon as possible during thawing.

Rich country casserole

93 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

Thawing and reheating: 60 mins

Serve this chunky casserole with buttered baked potatoes or with brown rice.

900g / 2lb chuck or braising steak, trimmed and cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes
450ml / ¾pt water
1 onion, sliced
10ml / 2tsp wholegrain mustard
1 garlic clove, crushed
pinch of ground cloves
salt and pepper
4 parsnips, cubed
6 carrots, thinly sliced
4 celery stalks, cut into 2.5cm / 1in lengths
450g / 1lb baby onions
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
60ml / 4tbls water

SERVES 6-8

1 Place the meat, water, onion, mustard, garlic, cloves and salt and pepper to taste in a 2.3L / 4½pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 40 minutes, stirring three times.
2 Add the parsnips, carrots, celery and baby onions, blending well. Cover and microwave at 50% (Medium) for 45-60 minutes, or until the meat and vegetables are tender, stirring twice.
3 Blend the flour with the water and stir into the casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3-4 minutes, or until hot, stirring twice. Stand for 10 minutes.
4 To freeze: allow to cool completely, then follow steps for wrapping, right. Freeze for up to 3 months.

To serve

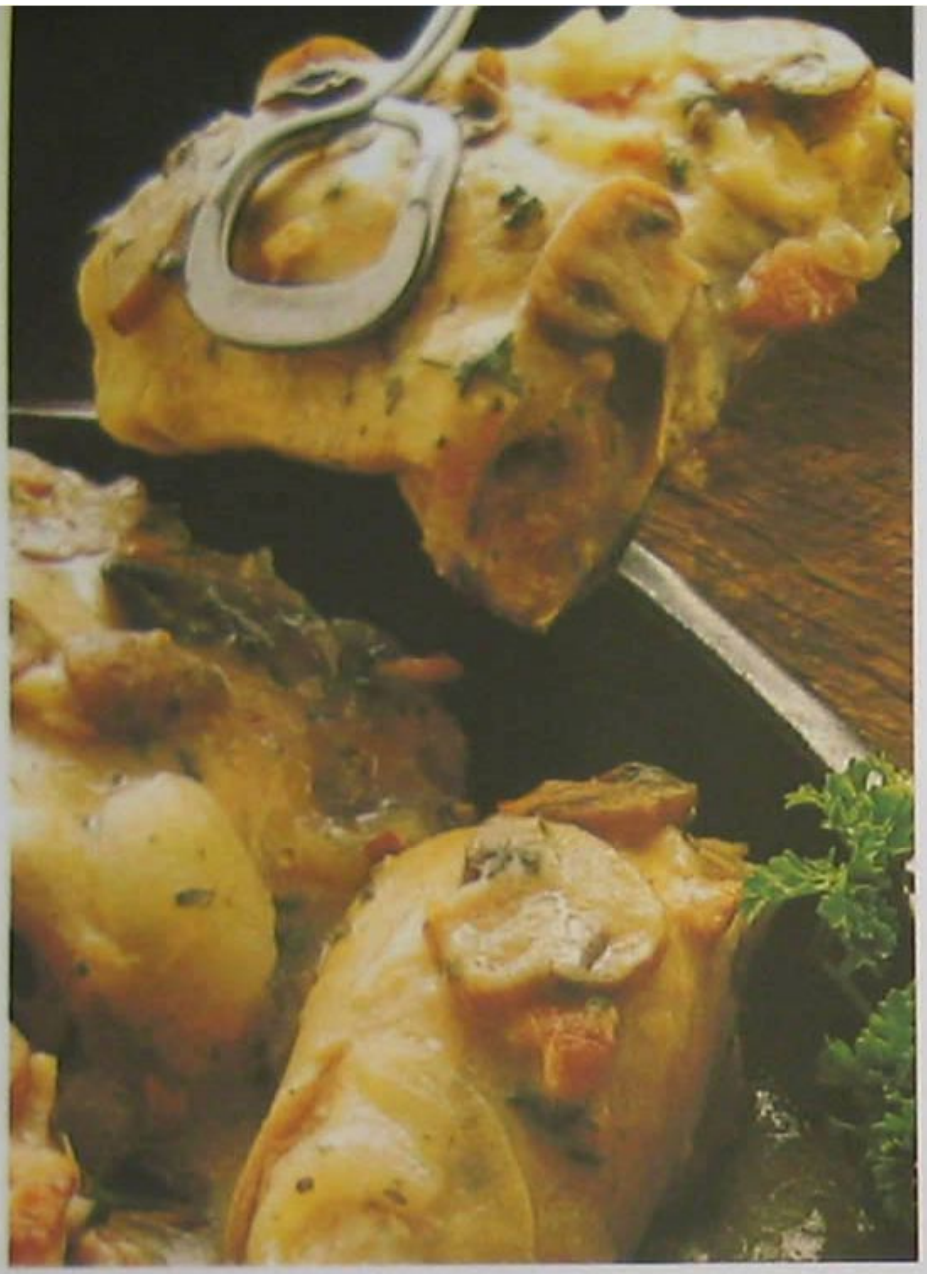
Unwrap the frozen casserole and return to the serving dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 40 minutes, breaking the ingredients apart and stirring three times. Increase power to 100% (High) for 5 minutes, or until bubbling and hot.

How to freeze and thaw casseroles

Select *a serving dish and line with foil or stretch wrap. Spoon cooled casserole carefully into the dish and fold the wrapping over the top.*

Open-freeze *until firm. Remove frozen package from dish and overwrap in foil or freezer wrap. Label clearly and return to the freezer.*

To serve: *unwrap the frozen casserole and return to the serving dish. Microwave as directed in individual recipes, breaking ingredients apart and stirring as soon as possible.*



Herby chicken casserole

31 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 30 mins

1 onion, sliced into rings
1 garlic clove, crushed
4 rashers bacon, rind removed, cut into 2.5cm / 1in pieces
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
175ml / 6fl oz water
45ml / 3tbls white wine
1.4kg / 3lb roasting chicken, skinned, cut into eight portions
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
20ml / 4tsp chopped parsley
1.5ml / ¼tsp dried tarragon
1 small bay leaf
salt and pepper
45ml / 3tbls white wine, to serve

SERVES 4-6

Above: *Herby Chicken Casserole*
Right *Easy Lamb Stew*

1 Place onion and garlic in a small bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes until just tender.

2 Place bacon in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 4-6 minutes, stirring twice. Drain, reserving 15ml / 1tbls fat in casserole. Crumble bacon when cooled; set aside.

3 Add the flour to the bacon fat, blending well. Gradually add the water and the wine. Add the chicken, mushrooms, herbs, seasoning to taste and bacon, blending well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 25 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked and the juices run clear, turning and rearranging the chicken once and stirring the sauce three times.

4 To freeze: allow to cool completely, then follow the steps for wrapping on page 1427. Freeze for up to 4 months.

To serve
Unwrap the frozen casserole and return to the serving dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) for 20-25 minutes, or until hot, breaking apart and rearranging the chicken portions two or three times. Stir in the wine and serve.

Easy lamb stew

13 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 25 mins

The courgettes and tomatoes give a Mediterranean flavour to this quick and easy stew.

350-450g / ¾-1lb cooked lamb, cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes
2 courgettes (weighing about 175g / 6oz), cut into 2cm / ¾in cubes
411g / 14oz can tomato sauce
213g / 7½oz can mushrooms, drained
15ml / 1tbls brown sugar
1 bay leaf

2.5ml / ½tsp dried basil
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place all the ingredients in a 2L / 3½pt casserole and mix well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.
2 Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 10-12 minutes, or until vegetables are tender, stirring twice.
3 To freeze: allow to cool completely, then follow the steps for wrapping on page 1427. Freeze for up to 3 months.

To serve
Unwrap the frozen stew and return to the serving dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 10 minutes, breaking apart and stirring once. Increase power to 100% (High) for 5 minutes to heat.

Microtips

It is important to reduce the power to 50% (Medium) while thawing this casserole to retain colour and to prevent the courgettes from disintegrating. Gentle stirring will also avoid damage.

Slimmer's notes

Easy Lamb Stew makes a really substantial meal without being too heavy on the calories. It gives 295Cal / 1240kJ per portion. Serve with boiled potatoes and salad, if watching the waistline.

Beefy bean casserole

27 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 28 mins

450g / 1lb minced beef
1 small onion, chopped
½ green pepper, seeded and chopped
800g / 1lb 12oz can peeled plum tomatoes
432g / 15oz can red kidney beans, drained
60ml / 4tbls tomato paste or purée
2.5ml / ½tsp chilli or Tabasco sauce
10ml / 2tsp chilli powder
15ml / 1tbls sugar
salt and pepper

SERVES 4

1 Place the beef, onion and green pepper in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 7 minutes, or until the beef is no longer pink and the vegetables are softened and tender, stirring twice.
2 Stir in the tomatoes, kidney beans, tomato paste, chilli sauce and powder, sugar, salt and pepper to taste, blending well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 20-25 minutes, stirring four times.
3 To freeze: allow to cool completely, then follow the steps for wrapping on page 1427. Freeze for up to 2 months.

To serve
Unwrap the frozen casserole and return to the serving dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Reduce power to 70% (Medium-High) for 10 minutes, breaking apart and stirring twice. Increase power to 100% (High) and microwave for 8 minutes, or until hot and bubbling.

Beefy Bean Casserole

Seafood casserole

7 mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 20 mins

25g / 1oz butter
½ small onion, finely chopped
700g / 1½lb monkfish tails*, skinned, boned and cut into bite-sized pieces
200g / 7oz can peeled prawns, drained, or fresh
200g / 7oz can mussels in brine, drained, or fresh
15ml / 1tbls snipped chives or 5ml / 1tsp dried chives
15ml / 1tbls chopped parsley
175ml / 6fl oz fish stock
125ml / 4fl oz dry white wine
pepper

Oriental Casserole

TO SERVE
15ml / 3tsp cornflour
30ml / 2tbls water
45ml / 3tbls double cream
croûtons and chopped parsley, to garnish

SERVES 4

1 Place the butter and onion in a 2.3L / 4pt casserole. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute. Add the monkfish, cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once.
2 Add the prawns, mussels, chives, parsley, stock, wine and pepper to taste, blending well. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes; stir once.
3 To freeze: allow to cool, then follow steps on page 1427. Freeze up to 2 months.

To serve
Unwrap the frozen casserole and return to the serving dish. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes. Stir and gently break up the mixture. Reduce power to 50% (Medium) for 5 minutes. Blend the cornflour with the water and stir into the casserole. Increase power to 100% (High) for 5-8 minutes, stirring three times. Stir in cream and garnish.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND
Use ling or gemfish.

Oriental casserole

10½ mins

Standing time: none

Thawing and reheating: 8 mins

2 whole boneless chicken breasts, skinned and beaten flat
1 green pepper, seeded and cut into 12mm / ½in strips
50g / 2oz flaked almonds
1 onion, sliced into rings

MARINADE
45ml / 3tbls soy sauce
30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
15ml / 1tbls dry sherry

SERVES 4

1 Mix the marinade ingredients in a bowl. Cut the chicken into 2 × 4cm / ¾ × 1½in strips and stir in to the marinade, coating well. Cover and leave to marinate at room temperature for 15-30 minutes.
2 Preheat a large browning dish at 100% (High) for 5 minutes or according to manufacturer's instructions. Add the chicken, marinade, green pepper strips and flaked almonds and stir briskly until the sizzling slows.
3 Add the onion, blending well. Microwave at 100% (High) for 5½-8½ minutes, or until the chicken strips are tender and no longer pink, stirring every 2 minutes
4 To freeze: allow to cool completely, then follow the steps for wrapping on page 1427. Freeze for up to 2 months.

To serve
Unwrap the frozen casserole and return to the serving dish . Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 8 minutes, stirring three times.

Microtips

If a frozen casserole is difficult to remove from its plastic wrapping, thaw in the wrapping at 20-30% (Defrost) for the first few minutes to loosen, then transfer to a serving dish. Take care not to overheat or the wrapping may melt.

Fruit cakes

This is the age of the one-hour fruit cake — including the making as well as the baking! Microwaving makes it easy to produce full-flavoured fruit cakes at short notice with no trouble at all.

The quick-cooking power of the microwave means that you can make a fruit cake within an hour.

For best results, choose your cooking dish with care. As most special microwave dishes have curved edges around the base, try using a soufflé dish for a more traditional 'right-angled' edge. If you want to ice the cake, this will give a good shape for the top — turn the cake upside down, as the base gives a smoother surface.

Lining the dish

Unlike conventionally baked fruit cakes, there is no particular need to line dishes completely for cooking microwave fruit cakes. Either line the dish closely with stretch wrap, making sure that the wrap fits closely into the corners and edges of the dish, or oil the sides of the dish lightly and line the base with a piece of greased greaseproof paper. If only lining the base of the dish, remember to remove the paper from the base of the cake before it cools completely, otherwise the paper may stick to the cake, making it difficult to remove later.

Do not coat the oiled surfaces with flour, as this gives an unattractive crust.

Almond Fruit Cake (for recipe see page 1434)

DON LAST

Mixing the cake
Start with ingredients at room temperature. Unlike light sponge mixtures, there is no danger of overbeating; the only problem is that pieces of fruit may sink through the mixture which is moister than a conventional one. To prevent this, make sure that washed fruit (such as glacé cherries) is well dried on absorbent paper and that pieces are not stuck together in lumps. If liked, use about 60ml / 4tbls of the recipe's weight of flour to coat fruit.

All the recipes here use large eggs so that the uncooked mixture is moist enough.

*AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND Use ⅔ cup flour. Use pecans in place of walnuts.

Rich fruit cake

28 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

This is a standard fruit cake mixture suitable for marzipanning and icing for special occasions.

75g / 3oz plain flour*
75g / 3oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp grated nutmeg
2.5ml / ½tsp ground ginger
pinch of salt
100g / 4oz butter, softened
100g / 4oz dark soft brown sugar
2 large eggs, beaten
15ml / 1tbls milk
5ml / 1tsp vanilla flavouring
100g / 4oz currants
100g / 4oz raisins
100g / 4oz sultanas
50g / 2oz cut mixed peel
50g / 2oz glacé cherries, washed, dried and halved
100g / 4oz walnuts, chopped

MAKES 10-12 SLICES

Microtips

Do not continue microwaving fruit cakes beyond the prescribed time — they should be taken from the cooker while the centre is still moist. Cooking is completed during standing time, but if you overcook them, the outside of the cake will be very hard and the centre will continue to cook during standing making the cake dry.

How to microwave Rich fruit cake

Oil *an 18cm / 7in soufflé dish and line with oiled greaseproof paper. Sift the plain and self-raising flours with the nutmeg, ginger and salt several times to mix well.*

Cream *the butter with the sugar until light and creamy. Gradually beat in the eggs, milk and vanilla, making sure that each addition of egg is well beaten in before adding more.*

Add *the flour to the egg and creamed mixture, folding it in thoroughly with a metal spoon. Move the spoon across the dish in a figure eight movement so that flour is evenly mixed in.*

Fold *in the currants, raisins, sultanas, mixed peel, glacé cherries and walnuts, mixing evenly. Turn the mixture into the prepared dish and spread evenly, using the back of a spoon.*

Stand *the dish on an inverted saucer and microwave at 30% (Low) for 28-30 minutes, or until just cooked on the outside, but still moist in the centre, turning every 5-6 minutes.*

Leave *to stand in the dish for 10 minutes. Turn out to cool on a wire rack and remove the lining paper from the base while still hot. Store closely wrapped when cool.*

RAY DENS

Cook's notes

Store microwaved fruit cakes closely wrapped in stretch wrap or foil in the refrigerator for best keeping. Remove from the refrigerator and allow to reach room temperature before serving.

Unlike conventional fruit cakes, these are ready to eat as soon as they are cool, and do not improve particularly through keeping. Allow cakes to cool completely (they hold the heat for up to two hours) before wrapping. The cakes will keep for up to three weeks, provided they are well wrapped.

Left: *Rich Fruit Cake*
Below: *Mother's Day Cake*

Mother's day cake

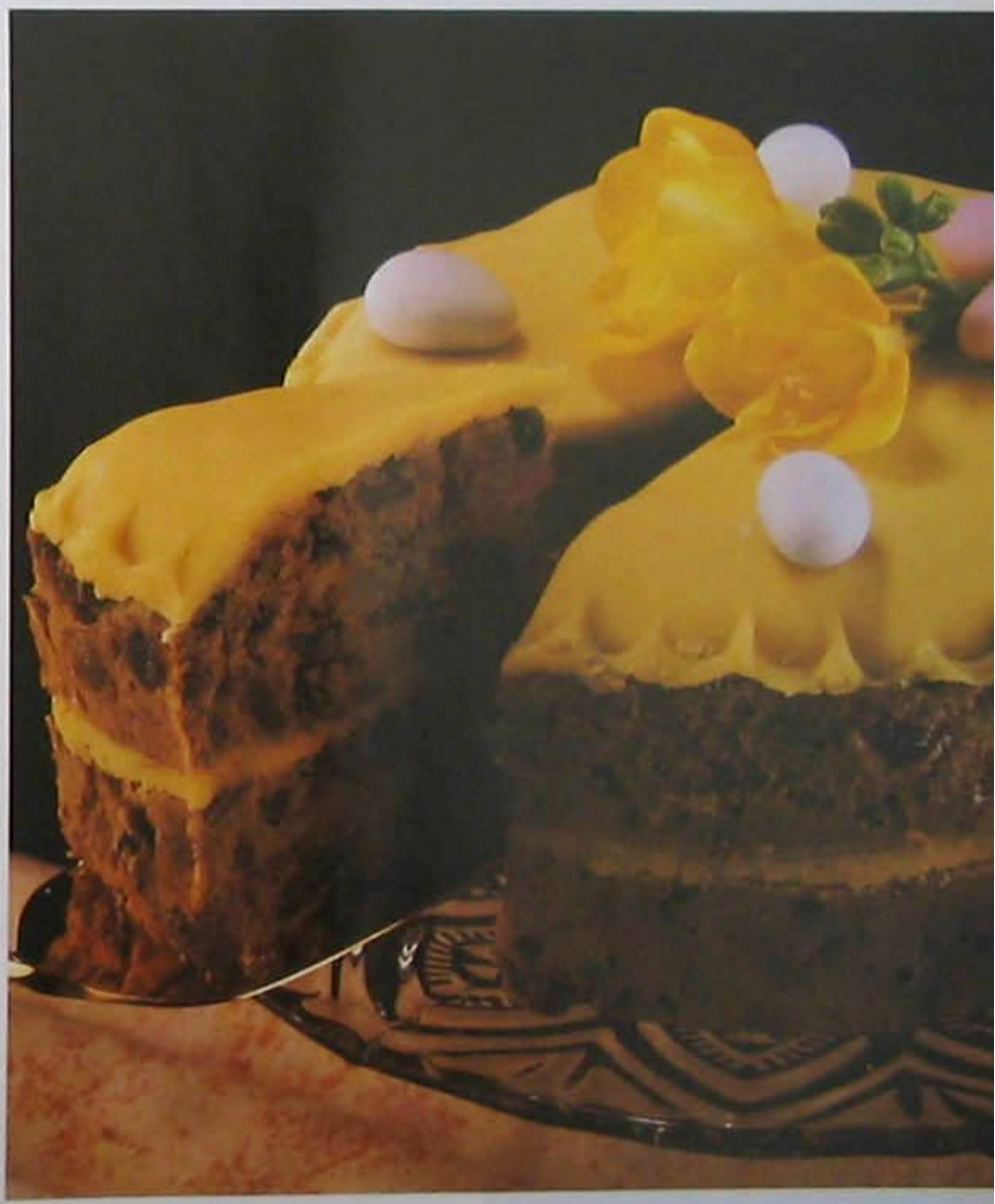
28½ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

1 quantity Rich fruit cake (see recipe on page 1432)
450g / 1lb almond marzipan
60ml / 4tbls apricot jam
sugared almonds, to decorate
non-poisonous fresh flowers, to decorate

MAKES 10-12 SLICES

1 Prepare the cake mixture according to the recipe and spread half in an oiled and lined 18cm / 7in soufflé dish (see recipe).
2 Dust a surface lightly with cornflour and roll out half the marzipan to an 18cm / 7in round. Place this on top of the cake mixture. Cover with remaining mixture.
3 Stand the dish on an inverted saucer and microwave, stand and cool the cake according to the recipe, removing it from the cooker while still moist.
4 Sieve the apricot jam into a small bowl and microwave at 100% (High) for 30 seconds, or until melted. Brush the top of the cake with most of the jam.
5 Roll out remainder of the marzipan to a round to fit the top of the cake. Place it on cake and crimp edges. Decorate cake.



CHRIS KNAGGS

Dark fruit cake

25¼ mins

Standing time: 10 mins

75ml / 5tbls brandy
100g / 4oz dried apricots, chopped
225g / 8oz raisins
225g / 8oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
2.5ml / ½tsp grated nutmeg
pinch of ground cloves
pinch of salt
75g / 3oz caster sugar
75g / 3oz dark soft brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls black treacle
75g / 3oz margarine, softened
3 large eggs, beaten
100g / 4oz red glacé cherries, washed, dried and halved
100g / 4oz green glacé cherries, washed, dried and halved
225g / 8oz stoned dates, coarsely chopped
175g / 6oz walnuts*, chopped

MAKES 10-12 SLICES

1 Lightly oil a 900g / 2lb loaf dish and line the base with oiled greaseproof paper.
2 Pour the brandy into a bowl, add the apricots and raisins and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 seconds. Do not leave unattended in the microwave, as alcohol may overheat.
3 Sift the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and salt into a large bowl. Make a well in the centre and add the sugars, treacle, margarine and eggs.
4 Beat, using an electric mixer at high speed to mix the ingredients. Continue until the mixture is evenly blended. Fold in the soaked apricots and raisins, glacé cherries, dates and walnuts.
5 Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared dish. Shield corners with smooth foil. Place on an upturned saucer and microwave at 100% (High) for 25-30 minutes, giving a quarter turn every 5 minutes. The cake is ready when a cocktail stick inserted in the side comes out clean. Stand for 10 minutes then turn out and cool.

Dark Fruit Cake

Almond fruit cake

32 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

100g / 4oz plain flour
100g / 4oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
175g / 6oz butter, softened
175g / 6oz soft brown sugar
30ml / 2tbls black treacle
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
3 large eggs, beaten
100g / 4oz sultanas
225g / 8oz raisins
100g / 4oz currants
50g / 2oz cut mixed peel
60ml / 4tbls ground almonds
16-20 whole blanched almonds

MAKES 10-12 SLICES

1 Lightly oil a 20cm / 8in soufflé dish and line the base with oiled greaseproof paper.
2 Sift the flours with the salt into a bowl. Cream the butter and sugar together in a large bowl until smooth. Add the treacle and lemon zest. Beat the eggs into the creamed mixture a little at a time, adding a little flour with the egg to prevent curdling.
3 Fold the flour in to the mixture with the sultanas, raisins, currants, peel and ground almonds.
4 Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared dish. Stand on an inverted saucer and microwave at 30% (Low) for 20 minutes. Remove from the cooker and arrange the whole blanched almonds in rings around the top of the cake, working towards the centre. Microwave at 30% (Low) for 12-14 minutes, or until just cooked on the outside and moist in the centre.
5 Stand for 10 minutes in the dish, then turn out and cool on a wire rack.

Microtips

To blanch almonds, place the nuts in a small dish and add enough water to just cover them. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes then drain, rinse in cold water and remove skins.

Quick glacé fruit cake

35½ mins

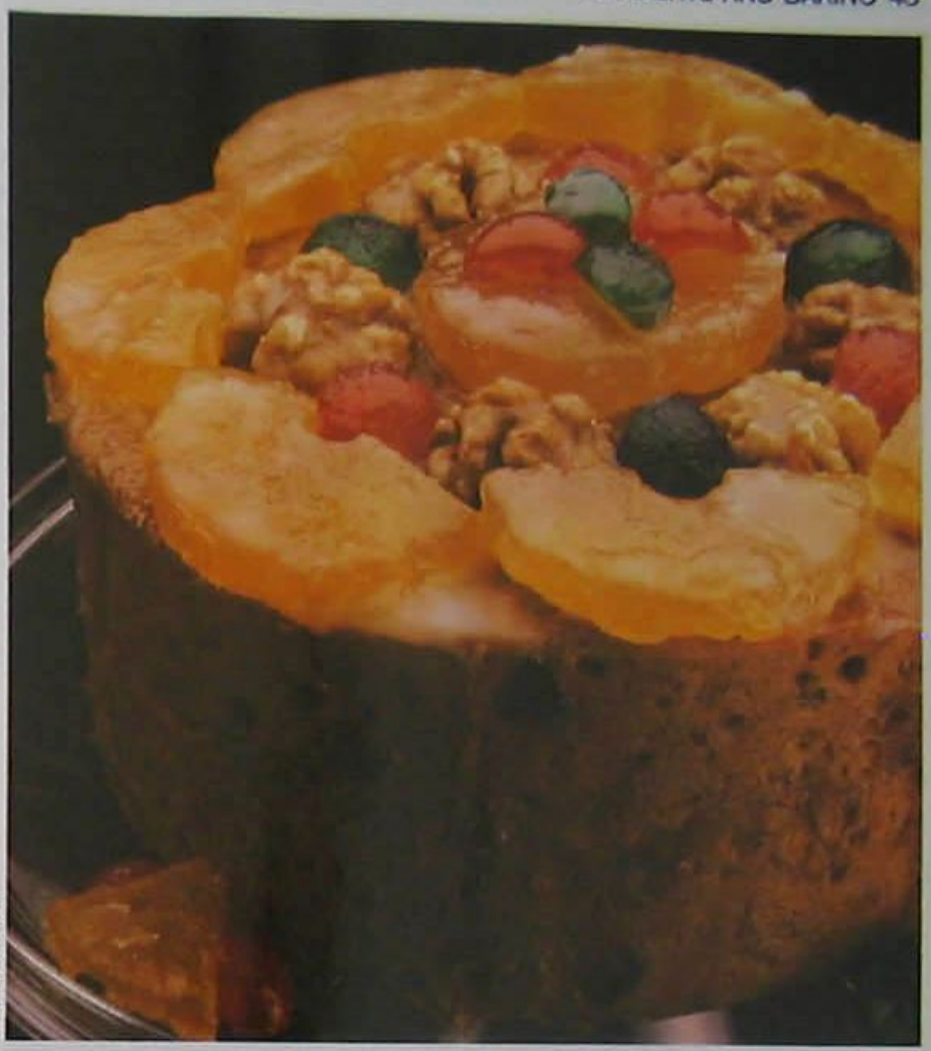
Standing time: 10 mins

175g / 6oz self-raising flour
2.5ml / ½tsp baking powder
pinch of salt
100g / 4oz dried apricots, chopped
90ml / 6tbls water
100g / 4oz glacé cherries
100g / 4oz cut mixed peel
100g / 4oz walnut pieces*
100g / 4oz margarine, softened
100g / 4oz dark soft brown sugar
2 large eggs, beaten
2.5ml / ½tsp vanilla flavouring

DECORATION
75ml / 5tbls water
100g / 4oz caster sugar
few drops of lemon juice
glacé pineapple rings
red glacé cherries
green glacé cherries
walnut halves*

MAKES 8-10 SLICES

1 Oil the base and sides of an 18cm / 7in soufflé dish. Line with oiled greaseproof paper.
2 Sift the flour, baking powder and salt into a large bowl.
3 Place the apricots in a bowl with 45ml / 3tbls of the water. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 2½ minutes. Allow to cool. Add to the flour with all the other ingredients, beating well.
4 Spread the mixture in the prepared dish. Place on an inverted saucer in the cooker and microwave at 30% (Low) for 28 minutes, or until cooked, giving the dish a quarter turn every 5 minutes.
5 Stand for 10 minutes, then turn out on to a wire rack.
6 To decorate, microwave the water, in a small covered bowl, at 100% (High) for 1½ minutes, or until boiling. Add the sugar and lemon juice. Stir to dissolve, then microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes. Leave to cool.
7 Brush the cake with syrup. Arrange the pineapple rings, cherries and nuts on the cake. Microwave remaining syrup at 100% (High) for 30 seconds, then brush over the fruit.



CHRIS KNAGGS

Quick Glacé Fruit Cake

Boiled fruit cake

33 mins

Standing time: 10 mins

175g / 6oz currants
100g / 4oz sultanas
100g / 4oz raisins
50g / 2oz cut mixed peel
175g / 6oz caster sugar
100g / 4oz margarine or butter, softened
125ml / 4fl oz water
1 large egg, beaten
60ml / 2tbls black treacle
175g / 6oz plain flour
175g / 6oz self-raising flour
pinch of salt
5ml / 1tsp ground mixed spice
2.5ml / ½tsp bicarbonate of soda
15ml / 1tbls water

MAKES 10-12 SLICES

1 Oil a 20cm / 8in soufflé dish and line the base with oiled greaseproof paper. Place the currants, sultanas, raisins, peel, sugar, margarine and water in a large bowl. Cover and microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, stirring once, until hot and the margarine and sugar have melted.
2 Allow the fruit mixture to cool a little, then stir in the egg and treacle, mixing well.
3 Sift the plain and self-raising flours with the salt and mixed spice. Dissolve the bicarbonate of soda in the water and mix into the fruit. Stir in the flour.
4 Place a greased 6cm / 2¼in diameter glass tumbler, open end up, in the centre of the prepared dish, then spoon the cake mixture around it.
5 Place on an inverted saucer and microwave at 30% (Low) for 30-33 minutes, or until the cake is just cooked, giving the dish a quarter turn every 5-6 minutes.
6 Stand in the dish for 10 minutes, then turn out and leave to cool on a wire rack.

Combination cookers 3

A browner/grill in the microwave is a convenient built-in facility that enables you to give microwaved recipes a crispy, golden-brown finish without having to remove the dish from the cooker.

Lamb Hotpot

A simple — but very convenient — type of combination microwave incorporates a browner/grill. Working in the same way as a conventional grill, this facility adds the colour and crispness that moist and speedy microwaving lacks. Combination microwave cookers with a browner/grill work in two ways — either in sequence with the microwave or simultaneously.

Sequence microwave and browner/grill

In these microwaves the browning element, usually situated in the roof of the cooker, is used to brown and crisp food after microwaving. For convenience, use heatproof microwave dishes so you can switch directly to grilling. However, if a lot of fatty liquid has accumulated in the cooking dish during microwaving, always drain this off first as it can inhibit browning. Microwave standing time, if necessary, is achieved during browning.

The microwave cooker door must be closed during browning; if the door is open it cuts the element off automatically.

Because the browning element is run off the same electrical power as the microwave, it is not as powerful or as fast as a conventional grill. However, its convenience is ample compensation for any extra time.

Microtips

Lemon Meringue Pie, Golden Burgers and Lamb Hotpot can be made in a conventional microwave, then browned under a grill for a golden finish. Microwaving times are the same, grilling is faster.

Lamb hotpot

65 mins

Browning time: 8-10 mins

Standing time: none

450g / 1lb potatoes, thinly sliced
700g / 1½lb rack of lamb, cut into cutlets and trimmed
2 onions, thinly sliced
100g / 4oz button mushrooms
salt and pepper
150ml / ¼pt meat or chicken stock
15g / ½oz butter, melted

SERVES 4-6

1 Cover the base of a 1.4-1.7L / 2½-3pt heatproof casserole with a few potato slices.
2 Layer the lamb on top and cover with the onions and mushrooms. Season to taste.
3 Arrange the rest of the potato slices, overlapping on top. Add the stock. Brush the potatoes with some of the melted butter to coat.
4 Place on the shelf and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes, then reduce to 30% (Low) and microwave for about 1 hour, or until the meat and potatoes are cooked and tender when pierced with a knife.
5 Brush the potatoes with the remaining butter and brown for about 8-10 minutes, or until browned and crisp. Serve with peas or another green vegetable.

DON LAST

Golden burgers

3 mins

Browning time: 4-5 mins

Standing time: none

225g / 8oz lean minced beef
1 small onion, grated
5ml / 1tsp dried mixed herbs
30ml / 2tbls plain flour
dash of Worcestershire sauce (optional)
salt and pepper to taste
4 baps or soft rolls (see Cook's notes) and choice of relishes, to serve

SERVES 4

1 Combine all the ingredients for the burgers in a large bowl and mix together thoroughly. Divide the mixture into four and shape into patties about the size of baps.
2 Arrange the burgers on a heatproof plate and place on the shelf. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2 minutes: turn over and drain off any excess fat, then microwave for a further 1 minute.
3 Turn on the browner/grill and cook for 4-5 minutes, or until browned to taste. Serve in baps.

Golden Burgers

How to use a microwave with browner/grill

- Use a browner/grill for dishes that benefit from a golden finish: gratins, crumbles, meat, poultry and chops.
- Use heatproof, but **not** metal, containers, when using a browner.
- Use oven gloves to remove dishes from cooker as they will be hot.
- For ease, microwave all stages of the recipe on the shelf, so it is in position for browning.
- If you have a choice of positions for the shelf, follow the manufacturer's instructions for individual recipes.
- During microwaving, food should be arranged and rearranged in the same way as conventional microwaving.
- Standing time is achieved during browning in the sequence-style combination microwave and is not necessary in the simultaneous-style combination microwave. In the latter, the food is cooked when it appears to be.

Cook's notes

If wished, place the baps under the browner/grill when turned on, to brown the burgers, so the baps are lightly toasted.

Lemon meringue pie

6 mins

Browning time: 8-10 mins

Standing time: none

This classic dessert will grace a dinner party as well as be eternally popular with the family.

175g / 6oz shortcrust pastry, Part 14, page 370

FILLING

125ml / 4fl oz lemon juice
175ml / 6fl oz water
grated zest of 2 lemons
60ml / 12tsp cornflour
200g / 7oz caster sugar
2 eggs, separated

SERVES 4-6

VARIATION

Make Orange Meringue Pie instead, use 125ml / 4fl oz fresh orange juice and the grated zest of 2 oranges. Prepare and microwave the pie in the same way.

Microtips

If you have a choice of shelf positions, place shelf in the centre of cooker, or follow manufacturer's instructions. Food may take a little longer to colour than when situated nearer the top of the cooker, but it will brown evenly.

How to microwave Lemon meringue pie

Line *15cm / 6in flan dish with pastry; pinch up edges above rim. Prick pastry; line base with absorbent paper. Place on shelf. Microwave at 100% (High) for 3 minutes, rotating twice. Remove paper. Brown 4-5 minutes until crisp.*

Combine *lemon juice, water and lemon zest. In a jug, mix the cornflour with a little of the lemon liquid, then gradually stir in to rest. Microwave at 100% (High) for 2-3 minutes, stirring every 15 seconds, until thick.*

Whisk *75g / 3oz sugar with the egg yolks, then beat into the lemon mixture. Pour into pastry case. Using clean beaters, whisk the egg whites until stiff; carefully fold in the remaining sugar with a metal spoon.*

Pile *the meringue on to the filling, taking it right to the pastry. Do not spread too smoothly. Microwave at 100% (High) for 1 minute, then brown for 4-5 minutes, or until the meringue is crisp and lightly browned.*

Simultaneous microwave and browner/grill

In these models the browner is used at the same time as the microwave method of cooking. This means an attractive finish for food is achieved in the same short time as normal microwaving. Simply set the time for microwaving and at the same time incorporate the grill a few minutes before the end of cooking. The sort of dishes which benefit from a golden finish (such as gratins, roast meat or poultry, crumbles or breadcrumb-topped food), usually need only 5-10 minutes to acquire a golden brown finish under the microwave browner/grill. The food will be cooked when it appears to be, as in conventional cooking, and no standing time is necessary.

Again, use heatproof microwave dishes and remember they will be hot when removed from under the browner/grill.

Fruity stuffed chops

17¼ mins

Standing time: none

Combine the speed and efficiency of microwaving with the appetizing golden finish of conventional cooking.

4 pork loin chops, about 2cm / ¾in thick

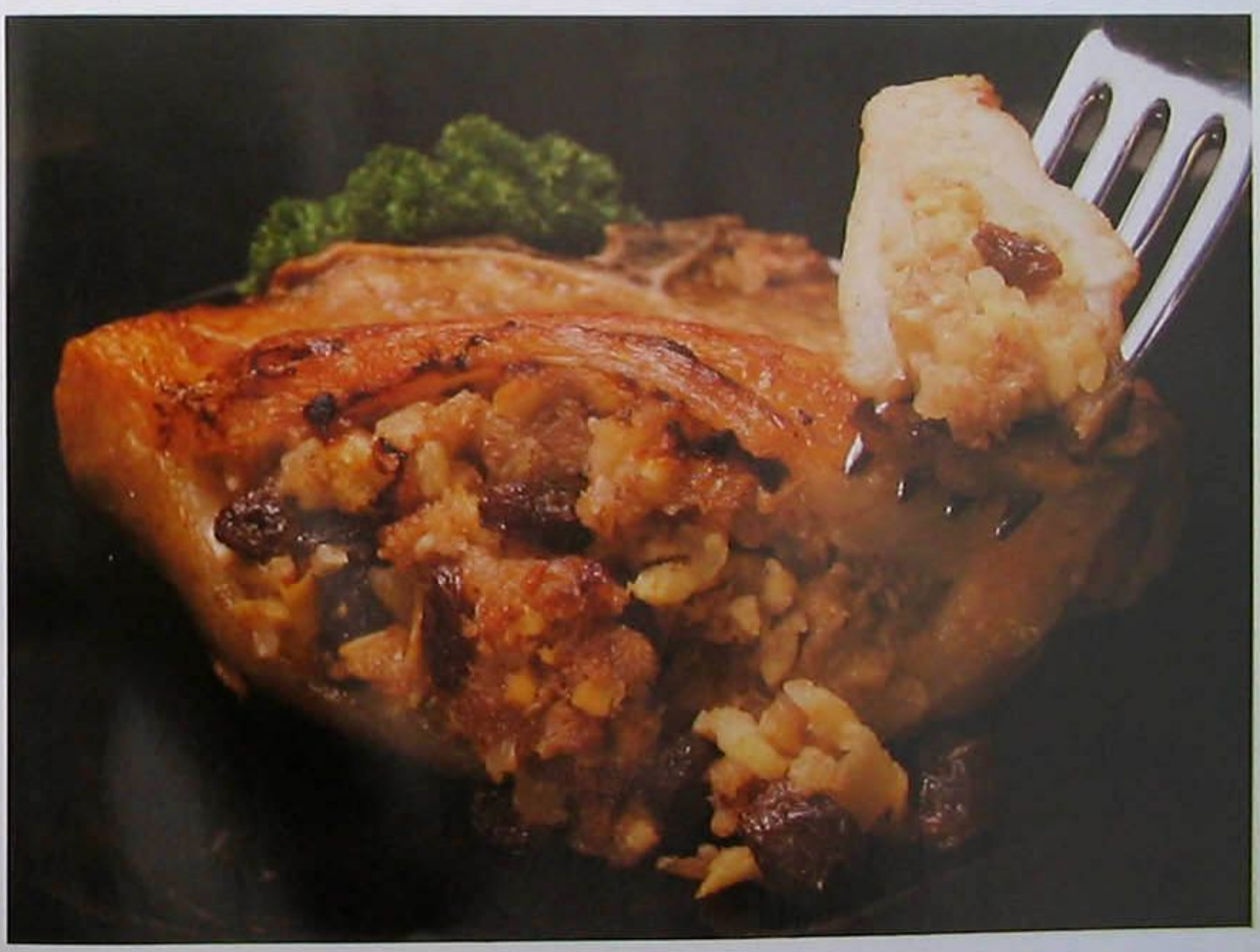
STUFFING

15g / ½oz margarine or butter
1 small onion, chopped
50g / 2oz raisins
1 small dessert apple, peeled, cored and grated
45ml / 3tbls chopped mixed nuts
50g / 2oz fresh brown breadcrumbs
salt and pepper
1 small egg, beaten

SERVES 4

1 Make the stuffing: place the margarine in a bowl and cover. Place on the shelf and microwave at 100% (High) for 10-20 seconds, until melted. Add the onion and microwave for 2 minutes, until soft. Mix in the raisins, apple, nuts and breadcrumbs. Season to taste and stir in the beaten egg to bind.
2 Using a sharp knife, slit each pork chop horizontally, from the fatty outside edge to the bone, leaving a 2.5cm / 1in border at each edge to make a pocket. Fill with the stuffing and secure edges with wooden cocktail sticks.
3 Put the chops on a flat plate with fatty parts to the outside, and microwave at 100% (High) for 15 minutes, or until no longer pink when pierced. Turn the chops over and rearrange after 5 minutes and turn the grill on after 9 minutes; turn the chops over again after 12 minutes of cooking.

Fruity Stuffed Chops



DON LAST

Raspberry Apple Crumble

Raspberry apple crumble

15 mins

Standing time: none

50g / 2oz caster sugar
2.5ml / ½tsp ground cinnamon
450g / 1lb cooking apples, peeled cored and thinly sliced
385g / 13oz can raspberries, drained
cream or natural yoghurt, to serve

CRUMBLE
175g / 6oz plain flour
75g / 3oz margarine or butter, diced
75g / 3oz sugar

SERVES 6

1 To make crumble, sift flour and rub in margarine to resemble breadcrumbs. Stir in sugar.
2 Mix caster sugar and cinnamon together. Grease a deep 1.4L / 2½pt pie dish; layer in apples and raspberries, sprinkling the spiced sugar in between. Place dish on shelf and microwave at 100% (High) for 5 minutes.
3 Sprinkle the crumble mixture evenly over the fruit. Microwave at 100% (High) for 10 minutes, turning on the browner/grill after 5 minutes.

Cheesy topped lasagne

29½ mins

Standing time: none

30ml / 2tbls vegetable oil
450g / 1lb courgettes, sliced
2 onions, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, chopped
5ml / 1tsp dried thyme
225g / 8oz mushrooms, sliced
salt and pepper
8 sheets of pre-cooked lasagne, soaked for 3 minutes in boiling water, then drained
4 tomatoes, sliced
40g / 1½oz Cheddar, grated

WHITE SAUCE
50g / 2oz margarine or butter
50g / 2oz plain flour
575ml / 1pt milk

SERVES 4

1 Place the oil, courgettes, onions, garlic and thyme in a large dish. Place on shelf and microwave at 100% (High) for 6 minutes, stirring three times. Add the mushrooms and microwave at 100% (High) for 4 minutes; drain and season.
2 Make the white sauce: melt the margarine at 100% (High) in a covered bowl for 30-60 seconds. Stir in flour, then gradually add milk. Microwave for 3 minues at 100% (High), stirring once.
3 Grease a shallow, 1.4L / 2½pt rectangular dish. Put half the courgette mixture into the dish and pour over one-third of the white sauce. Cover with four sheets of lasagne. Repeat the layers.
4 Pour over remaining sauce to cover lasagne. Arrange tomatoes on top and sprinkle over cheese.
5 Microwave at 100% (High) for 16-18 minutes, or until set, rotating a half turn every 5 minutes. Turn on grill for last 5 minutes, or until top is browned.